The May

ROYAL

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THE ROYAL MAGAZINE.

PUBLISHED MONTHLY.

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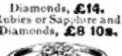

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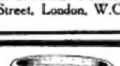

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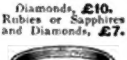

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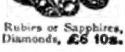

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Gown by Selfridge.

"WHO SAYS FROCKS?"

Everybody will when they have read the charming article by Miss Isobel Elsom on page 3, and paid homage to the pictures of this pretty young actress arrayed in the very latest confections.

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Cap by Selfridge.

Boudoir caps have a special, intimate fascination all their own. The one Miss Isobel Elsom is wearing is made of pin-spot net, lined with pale blue ninon. The cap is finished with lace and pale blue ribbon, and cunning little rosettes of ribbon are introduced at each side.

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"Who Says Frocks?"

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ASTOR, LENOX AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1916 L

By Isobel Elsom.

Illustrated from Photographs specially taken for The Royal Magazine *by Elwin Neame.*

The various gowns, etc., illustrated in the ensuing pages represent the last word of this season's fashions. They were chosen and worn by Miss Isobel Elsom, the beautiful and well-known actress, whose latest triumph as Molly Preston in "The Man who Stayed At Home" is familiar to all playgoers.—Ed. R.M.

Faille silk in petrol green is used for this very handsome gown. The skirt shows the very latest design, being full in front—

Gown by *Redfern.*

—and straight at the back. Embroidery in the new sand colour lends distinction to this very striking frock.

Who doesn't say frocks? Apart from the fact that it is woman's duty to look charming in war-time, and so cheer up her male relatives and friends who are soldiering, we all adore new clothes; so what's the use of pretending we don't?

Here I pause and strain my ears to catch the scornful snort of the scornful male who *hasn't* enlisted, and who will deliver himself of the following correct speech:

"Can't think how they can take an

This trim coat and skirt in brown face cloth is just the thing to wear with the martial khaki of our men-folk. You will love your heart to the capacious pockets and the jaunty satin cap with its smart cockade.

interest in frippery when chaps are dying at the front. Perfectly disgraceful. Don't know what the women of to-day are coming to!"

Nevertheless, if you glance at the grumbler's garments, you will see that they are pleasant to the eye—as pleasant as male garments ever can be—carefully pressed, and so forth. He will not go without a new suit because it is war-time. And neither shall we! Why, how depressed the poor dear things in the trenches would be if they came home on leave and found us damp, dowdy, and depressed!

There is an old-world air about this dainty house frock of sprigged taffetas in the palest shade of maize. Ninon is employed most effectively for the sleeves and bodice.

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I don't say we mayn't have to economise, but for the sake of the people who make the clothes, don't let's go back to a condition of barbarism.

This year, as you will see from the illustrations, there has been almost a revolution in our outward seeming. The only reminiscence of what used to be appears in the *chic* little coat and skirt, which, as far as the skirt goes—and that is only to the top of one's boots—reminds one faintly of the strait and narrow draperies of yore. But actually it is a whole world fuller, and we need no longer risk our necks and a grievous rent in a good skirt when getting into a taxi or clambering over a stile.

You may exclaim abruptly at the outset that you don't like the new designs, but my counsel is: "Don't be rash!" Remember how hideous and impossible narrow skirts seemed when first they appeared in our midst. And if we seem to be progressing backwards this year, as the Irishman said, and reverting to the ideals of our grandmothers, if we are doomed once more to have a stern delimitation of the waistline instead of the long, subtle curves of last year—well, we shall bear it.

And what's more, we shall hug our chains very soon, and wonder how on earth we could have endured the barbarities of 1914!

A beautiful frock of rose-pink taffetas, whose crowning glory is the silver roses that are embroidered on the silk. Although designed for evening wear, the full skirt is cut quite short—

Gown by *Selfridge*.

—while the *corsage*, with its tiny puff sleeves, is simplicity itself.

Personally, I put it all down to the war. I think simplicity, or at any rate ostensible simplicity, has been the aim of the great designers. After all, in war time, we couldn't be expected to go about in those gorgeous, opulent creations that Bakst and the Russian opera popularised. They wouldn't harmonise at all with the stern and martial khaki that will accompany us this year wherever there are any men present at all. The splendid mess-kit of the British regiments is all packed away till happier times, and to match their simpler garb women will appear in the almost girlish and artless styles typified by the illustration on the back of the frontispiece.

For a good many reasons, I'm rather glad we have been simplified—to speak as if we were so many complex fractions—in spite of ourselves. Really,

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Gown by Selfridge.

What daintier or more restful than this frock of white ninon with its trimming of tiny ninon rosebuds? A charming touch of colour is introduced in the shoulder straps of pale pink satin ribbon.

do you know, I think the strain had begun to be a little unbearable just before the war. We seemed to rush from one extravagance into another, and perhaps the tango, that strained, solemn, highly complicated dance, was typical of the point at which we had arrived.

Young girls, as far as one could see, had more or less ceased to exist. They took on strange, unnatural, world-weary affectations from their strange, exotic, hothouse gowns. Even our very silhouettes became weird and unearthly. There was a sort of tense, electric, oppressive mental atmosphere, like the breathless pause before a thunderstorm.

Cap by Selfridge.

This boudoir cap, with its quaint Egyptian style, is carried out in shadow lace, and has a wreath of flowers and leaves in pale green and heliotrope.

Well, the storm has burst now, with a vengeance, and swept away everything unworthy and artificial. It has done away largely with the gulf between class and class, knocked all the nonsense out of us, and, except for the poor fellows who have paid the toll exacted of brave men—the toll of their lives—done us all a great deal of good.

And so I come back to what I said just now—that the modes of 1915 are war-time modes for the sisters and wives and sweethearts of soldiers. They are none the less dainty and fresh and charming, and I think we shall wear them with quiet consciences because of their unassuming simplicity.

Personally, I think they are delightful, and quite as attractive as anything we have ever worn. There is a slight suggestion of military uniform here and there that appeals to me in these warlike days, and for the rest I think that Englishwomen always look their best in unassuming toilettes.

It needs the poise, the assurance, the—there is no English word for it—the *chien* of a Frenchwoman to carry off wonderfully ornate and elaborate toilettes; this year we are going to have as good an

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Hats to Suit Faces.

Nothing could be simpler or more becoming than this coarse straw hat with its flat rosettes of ribbon and graceful, flowing veil.

cosseting and fuss aroused by the fact that grandfather is a man—one of those splendid creatures—and grandmother is a woman? Isn't it her earnest and settled conviction, as the politicians say, that a woman's excuse for existence is to look after a man, save him [illegible] sew on his buttons to up [illegible] if he has one, and generally [illegible] of life's minor worries, [illegible] the big things unhamp[illegible]?

Well, my feminine [illegible] [illegible] all those things, as far as in us lies, but [illegible] wider men[illegible]. We don't want to [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] the [illegible] nonsense of that sort. We feel we have a better opportunity in the world of frocks as our men in the fighting line and on the sea, God bless them!

There is no use denying the fact that, for women at any rate, clothes suggest the mental atmosphere, or ought I to say that the mental atmosphere suggests the clothes? Perhaps it would be more accurate to put it in this way: one's mental atmosphere and one's clothes must be in harmony, otherwise there is a subconscious fretfulness and unrest.

Well, to-day we are approaching more nearly the ideals of our grandmothers than we have done for many a weary year. No, my friends, I do not mean to insult us; I realise that we are wide-minded, highly educated, artistic and all this, that, and the other, but war has brought us back at the double to the grand-maternal attitude towards mankind, at any rate.

Hasn't your grandmother's attitude to your grandfather, that perpetual making of him into a little tin god, irritated you times out of number? Haven't you raged inwardly at all the

excuse than grandmother had for doing our utmost, because our men are very quietly and unostentatiously dying for us, whereas grandfather, a man of profound peace, was perhaps a little prone to take all the homage offered him rather as a matter of course. On the other hand our heroes are tremendously grateful.

And because they are so grateful and cheerful, we owe it to them to be cheerful, too. Personally, I always find pretty clothes a great aid to cheeriness; smiles come much more easily when you know you are looking your best, and a smiling face is not always easy of achievement nowadays. So for the sake of the brave men who are fighting for us, as well as for our own personal satisfaction, it's up to us all to look our very prettiest this summer.

I think even our grandmothers, who were probably less slaves to fashion than we are, would agree on this point. And, since the simplicity of the new designs is in our favour, there is really no excuse for being badly dressed.

I repeat, our attitude to men to-day is largely that of our feminine ancestors to theirs, only ours have earned it and with theirs it was traditional. And so in a measure our modes must match our manners, and consequently resemble to a certain extent the fashions that have gone before.

Yet just as we have proceeded a shade beyond the mental outlook of the ladies of the past, so you will observe certain touches —imperceptible but not without effect—that our new frocks have and theirs hadn't.

And that, after all, is the main thing!

Isobel S Kerr

Pyjamas and Cap by Selfridge

Prettier pyjamas than these silk ones in a delicious shade of shrimp pink it would be hard to find. Worn with a boudoir cap of fancy net trimmed with point guipure and a flat pink bow, nothing could be more fascinating.

The FATHER

By May Edginton.

"Howsoe'er man's strength be reckened
There are two things he cannot flee:
Love is the first, and Death the second—"

"There's nothing much the matter?" asked Benyon, with an undercurrent of fear in his beautiful voice, almost before the examination was concluded.

Sir Henry laid the stethoscope down, creased his expressionless old pink face into a smile, and laid a well-kept hand on the younger man's arm.

"Don't worry."

"I get these awful fits of giddiness when I'm on the stage—any emotional scene—that third act in *Sins*—plays the devil——"

Benyon spoke fretfully. He took out a silk handkerchief that blended with his faultless clothes, and wiped his forehead. The hand quivered and the forehead was wet. His tongue was unruly in essaying speech; it clave to the roof of his mouth and went dry. Of these things Sir Henry was aware, though his attention appeared to be given to what he was doing. He had crossed to a bureau and was writing out a prescription.

"Sit down, my dear Benyon," he purred over his shoulder. "Hot, isn't it? Let me see, *Sins* finishes its run this week. A long run. A brilliant piece. I went three times to see you in it—a wonderful bit of contrivance for me. Never get any time for myself, as you know. But I do think—I do *really* think—I'm going to have some lunch this morning. I've kept myself a full hour. Now. . . ."

Babbling serenely, Sir Henry rose, slow and big, from his bureau, and strolled across the room to where the pale actor sat.

"Now, you'll just get this made up at once and take it before you go on to-night, and again before bed. Bed should be as early as may be."

Sir Henry's hand upon the younger man's shoulder was fatherly kind.

"Then come and see me to-morrow at—same time? We will just make a note of it."

Sir Henry just made a note.

"I'm giving you," he said blandly, "just a little something for the nerves, and I shall be able to tell you more to-morrow. Now,

don't overtire yourself. Is the servant there? Sometimes they put even me own doorwork upon me. Good morning."

When he had closed the door upon the slim, gracious figure of the popular actor, the old man turned back into the room and washed quickly the hands that had touched Benyon. His pink face went angrily pinker, and set like a rock. When he had dried his hands he took out his notebook, sat back, closed his eyes, and nodded to himself two or three times. He was going to do what he could for Benyon; the actor's nerves, all at strain to-day, would be calmer to-morrow. The nerve tonic was to be to him as an anæsthetic before operation, the pronouncement of diagnosis as the operation. The big old man leaning back in his chair was very merciful.

"Well, well," said Sir Henry philosophically, rousing himself after some thought.

He opened the notebook, made a few careful notes on the case, and finished them just as the front-door bell rang. In a moment or two the parlourmaid came in to say:—

"Lunch is served, sir, and Mr. Harry is here."

Sir Henry hastened out into the dining-room to meet his son.

"Well, Harry, how's everything?"

"As usual," said Harry.

"How's the book?"

"Finished."

"How's Angel?"

"She's quite well."

"Come to lunch," said Sir Henry.

He took his place at the head of the table, facing a full-length oil-painting of the dead Lady Kent on the opposite wall, and his eyes travelled from the pretty, smiling face of his lost wife to the harassed, unsmiling one of her living son at his right hand. He said silently:

"Louie, my dearest dear, never fear. I'll pull our boy through."

The old man talked and laughed blandly through lunch. He was a figure of distinction at the head of his table, big and rosy, in a grey morning suit, black stock, and the finest of linen. He had stories and jokes to relate to young Harry, inadequately appreciated. He kept up the cheerfulness till the parlourmaid had placed coffee and liqueurs on the table and withdrawn; then, stretching out his hand, he said:

"Dear fellow, what is it? I know deuced well what it is, but it's for you to put the thing into words—if you like. 'Tisn't my place to meddle."

Harry took the hand, looked his father full in the eyes, went red and white, and gritted fiercely:

"Angel!"

"Ah!" said Sir Henry.

"I can't keep her," said Harry. "She means to go. She'll leave me."

"For whom?" said Sir Henry. "Pardon me, my dear boy, but for whom?"

"Benyon!"

Sir Henry shifted in his chair.

"Curiously enough," he began conversationally, "Benyon has only just left me."

"Oh?" The young man's eyes strained fiercely into his father's, probing and asking.

"A little out of sorts," said Sir Henry, toying with his coffee spoon, "and nervous about himself. These artistic people are all jumps. But that's by the way. I—I'm sorry to hear about you and Angel, though it's not a surprise. People have talked, and I was not altogether unaware of the way things were going. Is there anything more—more definite you would care to tell me, old chap?"

"Only that—I think Angel will go to him at the finish of the run of this piece he's been playing in."

"Why?"

"I know he's going to take a rest—they'll go away somewhere together."

"Does she know he's ill?"

"She thinks so. That—that makes it worse."

"Yes," said Sir Henry, "yes; with a woman it would. Inform love with pity and a woman'll go blind for anything, anyhow, anywhere. If she only knew——"

He stopped.

"Harry," he said hospitably, "have an old brandy. Let me pour it out for you." He knew how his boy's hand would shake. "There. Well, what are you going to do?"

"To do? There's nothing to do. That's the cursed part of it. We've had a scene about it—descended to that. I told her where she was drifting. She—she put her back to the wall and fought. She said she had given up caring for me altogether. It was last night, when she'd come back from having supper with him. You ask, what'll I *do?* What can a man do these days with a determined woman who possesses an income of her own?"

"You both married pretty young, you know," said Sir Henry, "you twenty-four, she twenty-two. And you're a clever chap, very—I'm proud of you—but headstrong,

and she's a beautiful girl, but headstrong. And you've been married four years and had no child. Isn't that a mistake?"

"Is it? I don't know," questioned the young man uncertainly. "At first we seemed enough for each other, and afterwards, when I began working pretty hard, I was glad not to have the disturbance. She, too, her life has seemed full——"

"She has filled it artificially."

Harry's eyes burnt in his haggard young face.

"Oh, Heavens!" he cried, "life is difficult!"

He struck the table with a passionate hand till the little liqueur glasses shivered and the coffee spoons rattled in the saucers. Sir Henry ignored the jangle. He was smiling a little at Lady Kent, and she smiled back at him from her canvas secretly and securely, as if they two had once gained and for ever kept the magic key to joy.

The father turned to his son.

"Harry, begin again, you and Angel. Take her away for another honeymoon." The young man stared. Sir Henry went on. "Take her away for a *long* honeymoon. Don't hurry. Put your researches and any other bally old thing away till after. There's my little Dorset farm; you two go and look after that for me; play at being farmers for a few months."

Harry burst into a sardonic laugh.

"Take her away!" he cried. "She wouldn't come. She wants no more honeymoon with me."

"But if Angel would go——"

"*If!*"

The doorbell rang.

"There's my next patient," said Sir Henry. "Well, *au revoir*, my dear boy. You must try to get this girl of yours away for a change. I must come and see you both one day soon. What are you doing this afternoon?"

"I have to meet a man at the club."

"Not going home, then?"

"Not going home."

"Good-bye, dear boy."

* * * * *

"Patient, sir," announced the maid.

"All right, all right, I know." Sir Henry looked round a brief moment from the telephone. Then, "That you, Angel dear? Will you be in this afternoon at five? It is imperative that I should see you. And will Harry be out? It is imperative that he should be out. . . . Thank you, my dear. At five then. . . ."

II.

Sir Henry, most correctly clad for afternoon calling, called upon his daughter-in-law at five o'clock in her little Kensington house.

She was one of those women who stamp their impress indelibly upon their homes; the interior of hers was clear-cut, convincing, soft yet definite in colour. She came across the drawing-room to meet her visitor, smiling a little, her head very high. She had a curious, crooked, half-wistful smile, and her eyes were unnaturally bright. Her smooth hair was wrapped round her small head to show its shape, and her crêpe de Chine gown clung to her long figure.

"Little hussy, you!" said Sir Henry to himself, as he took her hands. "I'd like to beat you!"

But beating was not the thing for Angel Kent, and none knew it better than Sir Henry, so he sat down and watched her while she poured out tea.

"Well?" she said at last.

She lifted her heavy eyelids, and let him see undisguisedly the blaze, the passion in her eyes. She knew the blaze was there, the flag of war; she thought she knew why he had come.

The old man sighed, and passed his hand across his eyes.

"Angel, my dear," he said, "you are a good woman, a very good woman, and I think a brave one, too. I am going to try your pluck sorely, I am afraid."

The blaze died from her pale face, and she looked at him in questioning amaze. He knew nothing, then, about the trouble between her and Harry? So?

She crossed one silky knee over the other, and took her cup languidly from the tray before her.

"Harry came to see me this morning. Be quite calm, my dear."

She was perfectly calm, if a little cynically impatient.

"Harry's not—not at all well, my dear. Now be brave. Be brave."

The old man rose and walked about.

"Excuse my fidgeting."

His back to Harry's wife at the tea-table, he stood on the hearthrug, toying with one mantelpiece ornament after the other.

"Angel, my dear, you know the trouble his poor mother died of? Heart, you know. I fear——"

He heard the rattle of china put down crisply on the tray, and the satiny swish as she rose. In another second he felt her

fingers on his arm, and there was her fine-cut face inquiring at his shoulder.

"You think Harry ill?"

"More," said Sir Henry huskily 'More."

"Then——?"

"My dear, he is my only son, and I know to-day that five months——"

"Do you mean to say *Harry* has only five months to—to—to——"

"To live," said Sir Henry brokenly, and leaning his elbows on the mantelpiece, put his silvering head down on his hands.

Tense silence in the room.

He felt, presently, her nervous hands trying to comfort him.

"Are you *sure?*"

"Perhaps a little longer," said Sir Henry, "if the boy were taken from his work, made to eat and sleep, live a restful open-air life. But in the end—and the end is near——"

His head went down into his hands again.

"You—you told him?"

"No, my dear, I did not. That is where your pluck must step in. You must bear the knowledge alone, or rather, just with me. I only told him to rest, to take you down to my little Dorset farm, where you could both play at being farmers."

"Yes?"

"He said you wouldn't like it, were socially tied, some rubbish of the sort that I knew wouldn't weigh with you an instant if you *knew*. I couldn't press the importance of going to him, so I came to you. It's such a little while he'll need you now. Five months—such a little while."

She turned from him, and moving swiftly to the window, stood looking out upon the quiet square. Sir Henry turned, too, to watch her. From the tremor of her shoulders he knew how she was twisting and wrenching her hands together, though her back was towards him. Her voice came—shaken and agitated.

"You were right to tell me. Of course, I shall take him to the farm. Of course, I shall never leave him till—till——"

"My dear, brave girl, I know. Women always give what's needed, God bless them. And Harry needs you now more than he'll ever know."

"*Five months.*"

She said it half to herself as she stood looking out of the window. Sir Henry knew, as if he could see through the back of her sleek head, what her thoughts were. An overwhelming sorrow and pity for the husband she loved no longer—a hungry regret for the waiting for her would-be lover. But the sorrow and pity would win five months for Harry.

"We ought to go at once?"

"At once, my child, at once."

"We shall go to-morrow."

"God bless you, my dear. And I know what you'll make his last five months—heaven. You can—you will."

A smothered sob. She turned and he saw her wet eyes, her mouth, so lately hardened against Harry, quivering. She was all woman, all compassion, aching to comfort, to give, and the old man, who knew women, saw all the thwarted maternity in her yearning for this outlet. Many born mothers only become the best of sick nurses, and Sir Henry knew it.

"It is terrible!" she quavered. "Terrible! Terrible!"

He picked up his hat and stick, put his free arm round her, and kissed her. His pink, wise face was set to a solemn mourning.

"We must comfort each other, dear. We've each of us work to do—you with Harry, and I've a patient waiting for me at this moment. Good-bye. And you won't tell Harry what I've said; you won't tell him I've been here at all? It's our secret, yours and mine. Good-bye."

He left her standing in the centre of the room, tears running down her face. He went slowly out of the house, down the steps to his waiting car, and as he went he addressed silently the pity and maternity in her eyes and on her wilful mouth.

"But nothing would keep you from Benyon, if you only knew."

Angel Kent was alone in her soft-coloured, clear-cut drawing-room when her husband came in. She heard his latchkey, and listened to his slow step ascending the stairs. The slowness confirmed to her every word that his father had uttered. When Harry came in with his weary air, she searched his face, and in the new light shed on things, found it drawn thinner than it used to be.

"Well, dear," he said in the manner of one seeking banal words, as he advanced to the tea-table, "have you been out this afternoon?"

She had risen hurriedly, and took the teapot from him. "Sit down, Harry; I'll pour out your tea. The scones are cold; we'll have some fresh——"

Across the table their gaze met. He

caught his breath at the kindness in her eyes, the softness on her humorous, wistful lips. She was thinking of the man she had loved, married, and tired of:

"You poor, poor thing! I should think I *can* afford you this five months—and afterwards it will be time for *him*."

Aloud she said: "Sit down, Harry. You look quite tired. I have been thinking, and I will tell you of what."

The young man's heart laboured painfully. He put out a groping hand to feel for a chair, his eyes on her face, and sat down half dreading what she might be about to say, yet buoyed with a sudden fantastic hope at the unexpected kindness in her.

"I was thinking," said Angel steadily, "that I'm horribly tired of London. I should like a summer in the country. Couldn't you put aside your engagements, and leave?"

"I? Couldn't I? Yes, if you——"

"We could let the house for the season."

"We could, if you——"

"I'd like to go West, Harry. What about your father's little farmhouse in Dorset? Wouldn't he lend us that? It's so much more comfortable to drop into a ready-made place than to furnish a cottage or take rooms."

"Angel," said Harry, carefully crushing the amaze and joy from his voice, "I am sure he would lend it to us, if you want to go."

"I should like to go to-morrow."

Neither alluded to the scene about Benyon the day before; she had the man in her thoughts, perhaps, but she kept him off her tongue out of some queer new reverential sense of what was due to her husband.

Sir Henry had letters from his son and daughter-in-law among his post the next morning. The old man, in his grey morning suit, black stock, and fine linen, sat alone at his breakfast-table, facing Lady Kent.

He always assumed that she took a fond interest in his correspondence, and he smiled at her before he opened Harry's and Angel's letters.

Harry was nearly incoherent.

She's going, and we start to-morrow for—do you think a new trial of life? I'll devote myself to her this summer. Surely I'll get her back.

Angel wrote:

We're going, and he doesn't suspect why. Don't be afraid that I won't do my best to make him happy for his last few months, poor Harry!

Benyon was Sir Henry's first patient that morning.

"You look better," said Sir Henry suavely. "That tonic did you good, eh? Made you sleep? Ready for all the gruesome things I have to tell you about yourself?"

He asked a few questions. Then:

"Well, now, to begin with. . ."

Benyon presently gathered together the crucial facts in Sir Henry's summary; not that the old man was over-technical; he made a point always of explaining professionalisms in the simplest way. He never puzzled patients. What Benyon gathered was this:

Firstly, Sir Henry considered him greatly over-strained; secondly, that there was no mortal danger; thirdly, that there *was* danger, not of death, but of Benyon, the handsomest man on the London stage, contracting paralysis in the left side of the face that would—yes, certainly—affect speech, with other unpleasant flotsam and jetsam of nervous wreckage; that rest and change were the simple, but only, means to effect a cure.

"What am I to do?" asked Benyon.

Sir Henry took up a sailing list.

"Will you do what I tell you?"

"Yes," said Benyon, twitching.

"Take a long sea trip, not on a big boat, calling regularly for mails, but on some cargo vessel that caters for, say, half-a-dozen passengers, where you'll be quiet. Pack up and go the day after your play finishes. Don't lose time. Don't," said Sir Henry slowly, "trouble yourself to write letters, and don't bother if you're out of reach of receiving them. Leave your secretary at home. Forget people."

Benyon sat silent. Sir Henry's little eyes, screwed and bright, like gimlets in his pink face, bored through him, and they were both thinking of a long, slim young woman, with a passionate mouth and sleek hair wrapped round her lovely little head, but only Sir Henry knew it.

He laid a hand, hypocritical, fatherly kind, on the younger man's arm.

"Go immediately and do exactly what I tell you."

"I will," nodded Benyon.

"You must," said Sir Henry quietly.

"I couldn't court—*that*," shuddered Benyon.

"You'd be a fool if you did," said Sir Henry.

"Well, I shall come back," declared Benyon, half to himself, after a pause. "It's a relief to me to hear there's *no*—no—no *danger*."

"Ah! . . . of course."

Sir Henry rose and held out his hand. "I shall come and see you directly I'm back to get my ticket of health," said Benyon with a laugh of renewed assurance as he took it.

"So? . . Good-bye," said Sir Henry.

Benyon turned in the hall with his gracious swagger.

"*Au revoir.*"

"Good-bye," said Sir Henry.

The front door closed. The dim, cool hall was empty save for the servant and the old man in his summer grey. He was lunching early that day, having to motor out of town to see a patient. He hurried into the dining-room, but he paused on his way to his chair before Lady Kent, who looked down at him urgently.

"Louie," he whispered, with a queer constriction in his throat, for he was very jealous of his honour, "I have perjured my professional soul."

"Henry," replied Lady Kent passionately, "go to blazes—if needed."

"I will, Louie," said Sir Henry.

He thought to himself as he sat down, "I wonder what he'll write to her?"

What Benyon wrote to Angel Kent—the letter, after a little delay caused by the careless servant left in charge, was forwarded to her in Dorset—was:

My Darling Girl,

I'm ordered away for a rest and change and *absolute quiet*. There's nothing at all seriously wrong, but overworked nerves (not for worlds would Benyon have hinted to a woman admirer of that possibly impending paralysis), and when I come back, dearest, we must be together. Meanwhile, can't you meet me to say *bon voyage* and to tell me again that you love me?

Will you dine on Saturday somewhere quite quiet—won't you relax circumspection and let it be at my flat?—so that we can have a talk before I'm off?

But owing to the delay over this letter, her reply did not reach London till Tuesday morning, and he sailed on Monday. Having, telephoned frantically to the Kensington house, and at length found the untrustworthy servant in to attend to the call, he learnt that Angel was in Dorset, and wrote to her again.

She cried a little over the letter and the hardness of their fortunes—their temporary fortunes, for it was only for five months, or thereabouts, was it? She put the letter away, and attended to Harry.

III.

They stayed at the farm through June, July, August, and she found herself by and by watching Harry day by day with a terrible strain at the heart. She was with him always—her duty, of course—and he was such a companion; such—since in her new kindness she again allowed it—such a lover.

To be loved very much, through a rich, pastoral summer, when all her womanliness was roused—by pity and duty, of course—and give, and give, and give, could not leave her unstirred.

There were no barriers between them now, of pride, of temper, boredom, or other people—no Benyons; nothing but the barrier, looming nearer and nearer, of death.

Death.

The phantom frightened her at night. In the night she would clutch Harry, and weep, and have to say, all broken up with fear and sorrow, that she had had just a bad dream. She must not tell Harry about himself, for Sir Henry said so, stringently, every time he snatched a week-end with them. It was a great relief to her when he came, for she could walk about the garden hanging on his arm, and talking—of Harry.

The secret was so much too heavy to bear alone.

Death.

But he was looking better. Did that weigh nothing at all? Was it impossible to effect a cure? Weren't even great doctors sometimes mistaken? That last hope, wildly forlorn as it seemed to her, began to lift its head, forced to action by some new element in her, in the last days of September.

Sir Henry had not been able to spare a week-end from town for three weeks.

The old man, sitting at his lonely breakfast-table in Wimpole Street, read a short note from his daughter-in-law, imploring him to come down to them for the next Saturday and Sunday. It was then Friday. Something in the tensity, the desperation, of Angel's few words sent Sir Henry out immediately to his telephone. He disarranged, arranged, and rearranged appointments with a callous disregard of anyone's feelings save Angel's, and caught a late afternoon train West.

He had wired his arrival to her, and she had contrived to get rid of Harry for the first moments.

"I've sent him to post letters," she said with a little hysterical laugh. She was deadly white, and her face looked pinched and thin.

"Are you infallible?" she cried, with heaving breast. He looked at her with kind, gimlet eyes, and drew in his breath. He touched her soothingly. "Lor', no. Lor', no. Who is, my dear?"
(Page 16, col. 1)

"And what," inquired Sir Henry, seeing all these things while busy unwrapping himself from overcoat and muffler, "was the special hurry this week-end, my dear? Harry not—that is, no worse?"

She drew him into the sitting-room off the hall.

"Are you infallible?" she cried, with heaving breast.

He looked at her with kind, gimlet eyes, and drew in his breath. He touched her soothingly.

"Lor', no. Lor', no. Who is, my dear?"

"I can't bear it!" she cried.

"It is hard," said Sir Henry slowly, looking at her.

"Hard!" She could barely frame her words. "Hard! Oh, God! I can't lose Harry. I—*can't*. You're not infallible, anyway. I must hear further—someone else must see him. You must examine him again. There's so short a time left if—— I can't do without him," she said pitifully. "Not now! Not—not *now*."

Light slowly grew in the old man's face.

"My dear, sit down."

He sprang forward to catch her, and she crumpled up into his arms.

When she could see and hear coherently again, she was on the couch under an open window, and Sir Henry was ministering to her.

"Don't be frightened, dear," he said.

"I'm not frightened."

"I believe," said the old man gently, "that you've got a wonderful piece of news for us—for me, that is, for I suppose Harry knows."

"No."

"No?"

"I was afraid of harming—exciting him."

"That sort of news won't hurt him," said Sir Henry slowly, and smiling. "Tell him directly he comes in."

"You must keep Harry here for me now. You must."

"If he's still well, looking better, in fact, perhaps we may hope," said Sir Henry, keeping his face in shadow.

"When shall I know?"

"My dear," said Sir Henry, "I'll tell you to-night."

It was at ten o'clock when, after a talk with a buoyantly happy young husband—"I shall have a very good grandson," said Sir Henry, "Angel's family are all magnificent—so's she—and you're like your dear mother, as sound as a bell and always have been"—that the great doctor came into the sitting-room to his daughter-in-law.

He sat down by her, patting her hand, and delivering judgment in so many rolling technical words that she never for an instant doubted his *bona fides*, let her gather, delicious bit by delicious bit, that Harry was better—miraculously better—almost clear of danger—that Sir Henry himself would never have believed it possible.

"Your diagnosis was wrong?"

"You may put it like that if you like, my dear."

A very happy old man took himself back to Wimpole Street on Sunday night, and on Monday morning skimmed the *Times* as he sat at breakfast opposite Lady Kent, who looked at him approvingly.

"Ha!" said Sir Henry.

The *Times* regretted the death of Mr. Benyon, which took place rather suddenly at Cairo. Mr. Benyon had been in indifferent health for some time, and, so our correspondent cabled——

Sir Henry patted his breast-pocket for his notebook, found and opened it. His rosy face was quite pitiless, unregretful, though a little professional satisfaction glimmered through.

He found the entry.

"Benyon. . . 'M. Yes. . . . Case hopeless. Gave him five months. End of May that was. Now we're in—almost October. 'M."

Sir Henry tucked the notebook away.

"I don't remember when I made a mistake."

DO YOU WANT A MONEY PRIZE?
If so, turn to page 67
and enter for our
Great Picture Puzzle Competition.

FLIRTING

By Frank St. Austell.

With the return of spring the subject of flirting crops up again inevitably, despite the war, for has not the poet said: "Love rules the court, the camp, the grove"? And here we have a very able and broadminded treatment of a most delicate and delicious art.—Ed. R.M.

Flirting is instruction in life. Moreover, it affords the busy or the idle a handy guide to human nature, for all people that on earth do dwell may be classified under two headings—those who flirt and those who don't. Those who do are the amusing people, who possess charm. Those who don't are just—others.

The capacity to flirt adequately is a gift, priceless and rarely bestowed by the gods. Its fortunate possessors own the key to an inexhaustible cellar of mental champagne. They can never be dull, because they never know what day or hour may bring forth a dear little flirtation, as perfect, as ethereal, as evanescent as the *soufflé* of a gifted *chef*. It may endure only for an hour, or even a few minutes; it may be a thing merely of the eyes, begun and ended without the speaking of a single word, and yet have the finish, the grace, and the beauty of a priceless cameo.

Perhaps I may be permitted to bring from out my own storied past a cherished example of this admirable, inarticulate type of flirtation. I assure you it will not take long.

The unpromising setting of the little idyll was the White City. An exceedingly dull person, anxious to bore me with a business discussion, had taken me there to dinner, in order to have me at his mercy. The meal, thanks to his unerring instinct for the wrong thing, was frankly execrable. His conversation wore me to skin and grief, so that

The capacity to flirt adequately is a gift, and there are no dull moments in the lives of the fortunate possessors, for any moment may bring forth a dear, delightful little flirtation.

Even the White City may harbour romance. It was there that a dreary dinner with an unspeakable host was glorified by a mute flirtation, with an adorable——

I screamed in the spirit. Then a miracle occurred.

We were sitting on the balcony of a restaurant. To the next table came a father and a mother of much the same type as my unspeakable host.

Frankly, they were mere clods.

With them they brought the most adorable maiden I have ever seen in my life. She was clad in simple and excellent clothes—a blue coat and skirt, a white silk shirt, some sort of white felt hat, set at the exact angle. Her face achieved sheer perfection of demure prettiness; her golden-brown hair caught the dying rays of the setting sun; her eyes were like the fishpools of Heshbon. (I think it was Heshbon, but I will not be sure.)

The parents, opposite one another, presented their shoulders to me; my dreary host presented his shoulder to them; the girl and I faced one another.

She and I recognised in ourselves at the outset oases in a desert of boredom. Her clod-like parents fed, grossly and engrossedly, and my taskmaster did the same. The daughter and I flirted with our eyes.

I do not in the least remember what the demon who paid for my food continued to say. I watched the damsel pick her way daintily through her dinner, knowing herself watched, and making every gesture of the knife and fork a poem of inspired coquetry.

Finally, my chartered bore began to settle our account with the waiter. It was the end. I raised my glass to the adorable maiden unseen of him or her banal relations, and drank silently to her beautiful brown eyes in the stingy red wine provided for me. And she, equally unseen, raised her glass in reply, and pledged me in lemonade.

My dull host rose, and I followed. Turning, I raised my hat to my little friend in mute farewell. Sweetly she inclined her head, and that is the complete story of not the least delightful flirtation vouchsafed to unworthy me.

The girl who knows not the art of flirting stands self-condemned to ladle the charitable soup and preside over plain needlework stalls at bazaars.

It is sad to encounter the type of girl who knows not the art of flirting. She stands self-condemned eternally to ladle the charitable soup, to preside at bazaars over the stall devoted to useful garments made of natural wool. Invariably she encounters one abortive love affair, of which she will tell you in expansive moments. Usually it is a thing largely of her own imagination, woven round a man who once looked at her in a Cricklewood 'bus. She used to declare he was X., the young *matinée* idol; nowadays, he is Captain X., V.C., who led the charge of the ——s at ——.

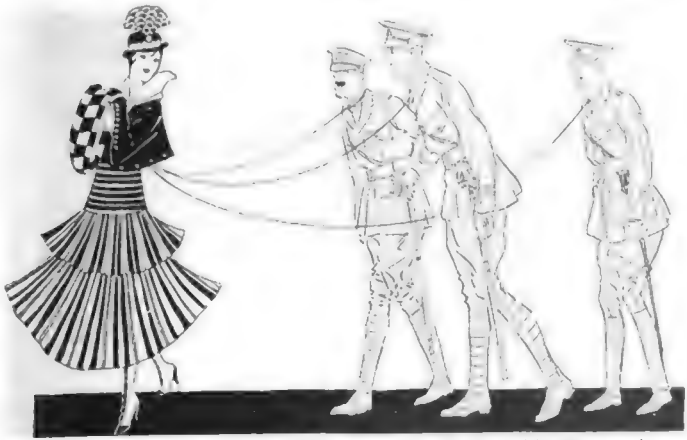
Those maidens to whom flirtation is the breath of life it is not necessary for me to laud with a feeble pen; they have the whole art and mystery at their finger-tips; they understand

——maiden, to whose beautiful brown eyes I drank silently in unworthy red wine, the while she pledged me with lemonade.

the sidelong glance or ocular *vol plané;* they wear purple silk stockings with no more emotion—or perhaps less—than if they were ribbed cashmere at eleven-three. I have seen them gazing out to sea from a seaside promenade as if the junior officers of the Brigade of Guards were paddling in the water when beautiful young men's eyes started out of their heads on the landward side, and in these military days the damsel who flirts holds captains and tempy. sec. lieuts. in leading strings by the score.

Practically all men flirt who are not mentally deficient. Some do so consciously, and these are often ridiculous; others unconsciously—the faithful doggy kind. The most attractive flirt because they cannot help it, and would not if they could, with a lazy, well-groomed, technically perfect finish that means nothing or everything, and represents more to a tired, cross, or bored woman than a month's rest cure, seven gallons of tonic, and sixty guineas' worth of new hats.

Those happy men who fall into the last category can make a plain, dowdy woman feel beautiful, young, and well-dressed if they set out so to do; unfortunately, they are so rare that they can have their pick of youth and beauty, and possess little leisure for unselfish miracles. On the other hand, I have seen the miracle performed, and shed two very small tears because of the privilege.



Those maidens to whom flirtation is the breath of life can be trusted to make the most of this military age, when they hold beautiful khaki-clad officers in leading-strings by the score.

Photo *Russell & Sons.*

Mr. William Le Queux does not base his assertions as to the spy peril on hearsay evidence, but on personal investigation, undertaken and carried through with remarkable skill and perseverance.

The SPY PERIL

By

WILLIAM LE QUEUX

There is no greater living authority on the spy question than Mr. William Le Queux, whose book, "German Spies in England," created such a sensation. In the following article he divulges some startling facts regarding the German spy system in this country, and makes a vehement attack against the apathy and incompetence of those appointed to deal with it.

A Network of Espionage.

WHILE seated, long after midnight, in one of the garish night-cafés in Berlin, seven years ago, I learnt, from the lips of a young German actress, a significant fact which caused me to ponder. Quickly I set to work to verify my suspicions, and on returning to London succeeded, after great difficulty, in convincing the War Office that Germany was spreading over Great Britain a wide network of espionage.

At that time, though I discovered certain spies in London and in Edinburgh, tracked them down, and revealed their identity to the authorities, yet there was no Act of Parliament to deal with them, and hence they were permitted to work their dastardly will against us. So rapidly, however, did the evil spread, and so openly were spies at work at our naval bases and elsewhere, that the Official Secrets Act at last came into being, and from that day to the present—though the British public could discern no breakers ahead on the level seas of their own money-grubbing and pleasure-seeking—I have been ceaseless in my efforts to track down the unscrupulous secret agents of Germany in our midst.

Of the political aspect of the present situation I will say nothing, except to remark upon one curious fact—namely, that at the outbreak of war, the head of the Department at Whitehall formed for the purpose of contra-espionage—a most clever and capable official—was, unfortunately, relieved of his post, and a new and inexperienced staff appointed.

My own experiences in hunting down German spies in England will probably interest the reader.

In the Pay of the Enemy.

I am not a politician, nor have I ever been affected by spy-mania. All I have done has, I here assert, been done without thought of monetary reward, but merely as an Englishman who, I hope, served his country years before the public ever dreamt that we should be at death-grips with Germany.

True, in some of my books I have referred to spies, but this was because, whenever I dared to mention that such gentry really existed in England, I was jeered at by certain persons, politicians and others, some of whom were in receipt of money from Germany. Of these persons, I was shown, before the war, a list from an official "friend" in the Wilhelmstrasse who happened to be *their paymaster!*

One day I may, perhaps, publish this list, with the amounts paid to them. I think it would cause a serious flutter in some of the pro-German dovecotes in Great Britain, and there would be an exodus of several men with well-known names.

Seven years before the war, Germany laid a deep and foul plot to lull the Press and certain politicians and prominent men into a sense of false security. We now know how completely that conspiracy has succeeded. In a certain limited circle it is known, too, how Germany is to-day blackmailing those self-same persons who have received bribes, and how they are held as puppets to play the German game.

Let anyone reflect seriously for a moment, and he will probably be able to identify some of these vile renegade Englishmen who are to-day quaking in their shoes while the

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Damoclean sword of justice is suspended over them.

I will give one or two examples of espionage that came within my own personal knowledge and have been investigated by me. The reports of each case are now reposing in the archives of what I may be permitted to call the Confidential Department, though that is not its name, and it is only known by a code-number.

One chill, wintry day, a few years ago, I chanced to be passing through a quiet street in Bayswater—Hereford Road, to be exact—where an itinerant German band was playing a plaintive air. To my surprise, I recognised, in one of the bandsmen, a smart officer whom I had met several times at the house of a mutual friend in Düsseldorf. I halted and looked at him, but his face remained sphinx-like, so I passed on.

Now I have a good memory for faces, and felt convinced that I had not been mistaken. I caused that band of musicians to be watched. For five months, in all weathers, they played innocently in various parts of the metropolis, picking up the coppers of the charitable. Then they went to Leeds, Manchester, Bradford, and other towns. For nearly two years they were here, and then suddenly disappeared.

The East Coast Menace.

Three months later, from a "friend" in the official circle in Berlin—the same friend who was the paymaster of traitors—I learnt this band of musicians had made complete maps and plans of the water-supplies not only of the metropolis, but of the various towns they had visited!

For the past five years the East Coast has swarmed with spies. My assistant, a clever Russian who has posed as a German on many occasions of late, and who speaks German as a German, I sent to Sheringham, in Norfolk, in January last. He actually lived there in a boarding-house on the sea-front kept by a German, and sat up half the night with this enemy alien denouncing the British, the boarding-house keeper declaring to his supposed compatriot that when the enemy made a raid, he had arranged to give them certain assistance.

What was done concerning him? you ask. Why, nothing! At the time of writing he was still carrying on his boarding-house. Why? Because the military and civil authorities in Norfolk had quarrelled over espionage, and the measures which the one took, the other reversed.

Incompetence and Apathy.

The British public—though we have been at war over eight months—have never yet realised the terrible peril of German espionage. I admit that there have been very many wild and silly stories told regarding it by hysterical persons, but the result of my own investigations over a certain number of years has proved plainly that the deadly peril exists, and, further, that the authorities are not only incompetent to deal with it, but are criminally apathetic. It will be for the public to judge such persons, and to deal with them by court-martial—after the war.

That a secret store of German arms and ammunition existed not far from Charing Cross station, I pointed out to the authorities, who investigated, and found my report to be true.

Again, in the vicinity of all post-offices in East Anglia, especially near the coast, there lived—and in many cases there still lives—an alien or "naturalised" German, placed there in readiness to cut telegraphic and telephonic communication on the day when the coming raid is made.

It will, perhaps, surprise many to know that since the war eleven aliens have been arrested while prowling about beneath the Forth Bridge, and that, though in more than one case the gravest suspicion has fallen upon them as secret agents of Germany—yet, in every instance, the police have made a feint of inquiry, and then released them.

Nothing Left to Chance.

Now police inquiry is utterly hopeless—and worse. In a case I had under observation, not far from Birmingham, not long ago, two men, posing as Poles, rented a big house with large grounds adjoining an important point on the London and North-Western main-line. They bought some furniture, and started a poultry-farm. Suspicions were aroused, and a neighbour wrote to me. I at once went there to investigate, but found that, on the previous day, a constable in full uniform had called to question the two spies, and that an hour later they had flown, leaving about £200 worth of furniture behind them!

Secret agents of Germany exist in every branch of our national life, from the circle of higher finance, down to those following such lowly callings as hairdressers and domestic servants. No detail of our weakness is too small to be overlooked by that system, which is, indeed, amazing.

Before me, as I write, I have an interesting communication from a spy, which, posted at Watford and addressed to a person in Amsterdam—a German agent, of course—was intercepted only a few days ago. It is written in cipher upon a London newspaper—various letters and words in the column being ticked or underlined. For a time it puzzled all cipher experts, but at last it was deciphered, and proved most interesting.

That all vulnerable points of our railway and waterway communications have been noted in readiness for destruction at a signal —this to be given by the arrival of Zeppelins over London—is well known, and, indeed, in Soho and in the neighbourhood of the Tottenham Court Road the coming raid is nightly discussed in obscure little restaurants frequented by our enemies.

A Vigil.

I have visited these places, posing as an Italian and a neutral, and I have seen our enemies toasting that Day!

While upon this point, I may, perhaps, make a revelation which may be of interest. I discovered, after much watchfulness, that in London news from Germany regarding aircraft coming to England was known to certain persons many hours before the naval or military authorities knew of it. This was a problem which, I confess, caused me many sleepless nights.

At last, having invoked the aid of a clever young officer of the Royal Naval Air Service and three of his brother officers, I set forth to watch. It was an interesting and exciting vigil, kept through some bitterly cold nights. By intuition, perhaps, I turned my attention to the Surrey Hills, and over those heights I kept nightly watch in a motor-car—exactly where I must not reveal.

Messages Made in Germany.

Let it suffice to say that by travelling over a hundred miles each night in one of the armoured cars of the Service, and constantly watching, my friend, the officer—an expert in signalling and a qualified wireless operator—and myself, also qualified in Morse signalling and wireless, established beyond doubt the mode by which German messages, dispatched from the Belgian coast, were evidently signalled to the Kent coast, and repeated from point to point to London, and beyond.

German spies in London are constantly sending cipher messages to the German Intelligence Department in Berlin, written upon newspapers, and addressed to Dutch towns where agents collect and forward them to Berlin. Here is the fac-simile of one, which was intercepted, and for a time baffled all cipher experts.

Upon a point high above Leatherhead at 2 a.m., on February 28th, I stood, with my friend and a signaller of the Service, and replied to a message being flashed from point to point. I actually repeated the code message half way through, and asked for the remainder—which was at once given to me, and which I duly acknowledged. And, that same night, the message I received was watched as it was repeated at Harrow and, of course, through England northward.

The mysterious message in question read:

S. H. I. S. (pause) H. 5. (pause) S. H. I. S. F. (pause, with light full on) I. S. I. E. (pause) E. S. T. (light out).

Now, the curious point of this cipher message was the number *five*, for, on the following day, I learnt from an official source that five German aeroplanes were in the Channel at that hour, close to our base at Dunkirk!

To describe how we stood upon those high hills, keeping a long vigil through the night, creeping up to houses suspected of signalling, and our escape from savage dogs, might be permissible in fiction, but in this article it must be omitted. I am only writing what is absolute and indisputable fact, which will one day, ere long I hope, be brought prominently before the public by the punishment of those responsible.

Again, I have been able to point out to the "proper authority" certain shops, one in Chatham, and another in Portsmouth, both of which were kept by Germans before the outbreak of war. They were spies without a doubt, for they were of a superior class to the ordinary little tradesman—and in both cases their owners fled in fear of discovery, leaving the stock to rot in the windows.

The Discovery of Gun-emplacements.

My readers would, no doubt, be surprised if I revealed to them the whereabouts of certain secret gun-emplacements, constructed by the Germans in peace-time, in some of the best positions for artillery in the event of an advance over London. One, in Kent, forms part of the drive to a mansion, till recently occupied by a "naturalised" German; another is in the form of a tennis-court not far from Hampstead Heath, and a third is at a point about thirty miles north of London, on the Great North Road.

Again, it is not generally known that just before the outbreak of war a German company was busily constructing a great airship shed westward of the metropolis, the plans having been innocently passed by the local council, while the police were in ignorance of the use for which the building was intended.

Suppressing the Spy Peril.

Naturally, the authorities are extremely careful to conceal from the public the truth of the spy peril. Mr. McKenna even tried to gag the Press. This is because of the deliberate apathy in high official quarters, an apathy which, in the present state of affairs, is absolutely criminal, and which causes one naturally to ask what is this mysterious pro-German power which is allowing us to be thus overwhelmed and undone?

Why is no notice taken of the constant leakage of information from both Admiralty and War Office, of the activity of spies everywhere, or of the constant signalling reported on the East coast of Great Britain, by such men as the Earl of Portsmouth, Lord Galway, Lord Crawford, and Lord Curzon? They, surely, cannot be accused of spy-mania, for some of them have, like myself, personally watched the signalling. We have, in our midst, an enemy as unscrupulous and as dangerous as any in Flanders, and I here warn the authorities that the present highly inflamed state of public opinion is such that, if they falter further, and do not appoint a central board to deal with this ever-growing peril, the public will take the matter out of their hands.

Without hesitation I declare that it requires but twenty men or so to raise a cry anywhere in the vicinity of Tottenham Court Road, and the police would, I am convinced, very quickly be rubbing their eyes to discover the lamp-posts decorated with alien enemies.

THE LITTLE HAWTHORN TREE.

Daddy's as tall as our creeper grows,
And Mother's as tall as its highest rose.
And down by our gate there's a hawthorn tree,
That's just exactly as small as *me!*

The creeper will dwarf my Daddy soon—
I was watching it growing this afternoon;
And then I stood by my hawthorn tree,
And it smiled because it's the same as me!

I'd *love* to be tall like Daddy, you know,
But, all the same, I'm not going to grow,
For the dear little, smiling hawthorn tree
Wants to be *always* the same as me!

Ethel Talbot.

The Bait

By

W Douglas Newton

"A weary lot is thine, fair maid,
A weary lot is thine."

I.

VERREKER was a big, lean man, with looks; all the same, the girl frowned when his patrol rode up to the farm. In fact, she more than frowned. Her foot tapped the yard cobbles impatiently, and under her breath she said in her own tongue:

"And you, too! You are as foolish as the rest of them."

She appeared to be examining Verreker's face for some quality or some defect she had missed on his first visit, a week ago. She seemed puzzled.

Verreker, no doubt, did not know her language, for he came up to her smiling more than amiably, which was rather unlike him—he was generally rather too busy—showing unmistakably that his first fleeting visit to the home of the most beautiful woman in the district had only whetted his appetite for a second.

Again, he probably did not see her anger, or he was remembering too well how pleasant she had made his visit before, to notice anything but the face and the exquisite figure, and the subtle and perfectly balanced coquetry that made the whole of her so alluring. He came towards her smiling a little self-consciously, like a man who had managed to steal time out of business hours to indulge his own pleasure.

The girl saw and knew that smile; she had seen many men smiling thus lately, but it gave her no pleasure. Her superb head went a little higher, her fine, thin lips tightened.

"Ah!" she breathed to herself. "And I thought *you* were—not so stupid."

Verreker was before her, smiling interminably, bowing in the stiff military way that suggested there was a rusty hinge somewhere in the small of his back. He was speaking barbarously in the language—not hers—that was the current coin of intercourse all over this war-wrung land.

"I fear I must intrude on you again," he told her, "and my patrol also."

She knew by the way he smiled that he guessed she would not be altogether displeased. The girl felt bitter against him.

"I would rather you went on," she said quickly, as though in danger of being overheard and condemned for her inhospitality—"much rather you went on."

Verreker's steel-coloured eyes went to her face quickly, but his smile was set in its permanent creases, and he did not move. The girl felt that he imagined her suggestion a clever form of coquetry, and her heart hardened a little.

"It is already night," Verreker told her, and he turned about as though to point out to her the wraps of darkness that were covering up the sky, and the mist that was already trailing over all the flat and marshy plain, and softening for them the humped outlines of the hills a mile away.

"It is already night," he repeated, "and really I'm awfully afraid—sorry, that is——"

He turned, looked down at her, smiled again, as if to say that they had both done all that was necessary to propitiate the conventions, and that now she could submit to the force of circumstances. She hated him for that smile; or if he had not been so good to look at, so fine and upstanding and clean, she would have hated him. With a gesture of her hand, she tried to turn him away again.

"We cannot provide for you, Captain. We are short of food ourselves, short of

fodder for your horses and straw to bed your men."

"That is all right," said Verreker. "We carry our food, you know, and we can rough it. We won't put you out at all—not in any way. We just want to rest."

He protested, smiling. The woman raged against the settled smile. He was a fool then, a fool of a nation where all men were foolish.

"I would rather you went on," she cried again, finding nothing fresh to say. "We would rather you went on."

Verreker's attitude was apologetic, full of the eager apologies of one wanting to keep up a good impression.

"Really, I'm awfully sorry. But you see I'm afraid I must bivouac here. All the country beyond this is cut up, you know—wasted by the fighting. There isn't any shelter. I'm afraid I must stay here. And the men are tired out, too. We've had a bad day."

He swung round and looked towards his men. The patrol had already dismounted, the men were already stripping the horses of saddle and pack. The snub-nosed rifles were piled, belts had been loosened, the maxim sections lay in a neat and handy heap ready for the saddle or the tripod at a moment's notice.

Troopers with the bump of initiative well developed had found a way into the large barn and had discovered at least enough straw for themselves and their mounts in that barn. The one man of the patrol (there is always one, at least, in every section of soldiery) who had the genius for the thing, was even now following his instinct towards the kitchen of the farm and the cook who was in it. The patrol, undoubtedly, had settled itself for the night.

With a despairing flutter of her hands, with a quick look that took in the whole scene, even to the advance picket, who had climbed to the vantage of a tree, the woman turned into the house. The fool was a fool, she was telling herself; nothing could be helped now. She made the Captain and the Lieutenant who followed him free of the living-room of the farm. And at last she was amiable.

II.

The woman put the big oil lamp on the table, sighed with the purr of content, and glanced across at the Captain.

"They have left us little enough, those beasts the enemy," she told him, "but we can have a little light and a little cheerfulness all the same."

She was quite charming and buoyant now; she was bewitching, too, in the amber lamplight. She seemed happy also, though her eyes were finding their way to Verreker's face more frequently than necessary, in those moments when he was not watching her, which is not the way of her kind. But her lips and her mere presence gave satisfaction enough, and filled the homely room with a sense of comfort and pleasure and alluring beauty.

Verreker, in a deep chair, was basking in ease and serenity. He nodded luxuriously.

"You have the divine gift of comforting," he said, slipping and plunging vilely over the compliment with his broken accent, "not only the heart, but the eyes of man."

The woman laughed a little, a laugh more sure of itself. She was realising that the firm lines of his face meant nothing, that he could be as stupid as the rest of his country's officers.

"I love light," she said. "I love brightness, great brightness, filling the whole house."

"I adore *this* kind of brightness," murmured Verreker, and his face was smiling up to hers, pointing the inference, and his steel-coloured eyes were fixed on her unwaveringly.

("This is the Book of Revelations," muttered the mind of the Lieutenant. "Who would have thought that old Soldier Verreker could be a man like other men? Never guessed the hard old nut had a heart in him." The Lieutenant had adored the woman from the first moment.)

The woman laughed again, with a fleck of iron in the laugh.

"On these dreary nights light is a gift. I love a house full of it. I like to come to a house shining in every window with it."

She spoke almost too evenly. As she spoke she turned, and her fingers attended to the lamp, which was burning perfectly. Verreker still looked at her, only he was not smiling.

"Yes," he said, with a drawl that filled out time—"yes, I adore that kind of light, too. But not just now. It's dangerous."

"Dangerous?" gasped the woman, and she did that almost too quickly. "Dangerous?"

"A man in my squadron was idiot enough to light a cigarette in the upper room of a deserted house. He was killed by a high-explosive shell thirty seconds after. He had forgotten that that room had a window."

Great arms of bitter white light stood up into the sky . . . and began to sweep the surface of the flat plain. . . . "A trap!" cried the woman. "A trap, mademoiselle, and baited with the same bait as your own—yourself." [Page 19, col. 2.]

"O-oh!" cried the woman. "A lighted window! I forgot. We must pull down our blind."

"It would be safer," said Verreker slowly, but he remained sitting all the same. In any case, he could not have beaten the woman's rush across the room. In a flash that surprised them, she was across the chamber, tugging at the blind-cord.

Her anxiety made her fumble. Once the blind came two-thirds down, and slipped up again. Once again it all but covered the square of vivid light, and slipped up. A third jerk, a third slip; then the frantic eagerness of the woman broke it. The roller, the blind, and one of its supports came crashing to the floor.

"Oh!" cried the woman. She stood for ten seconds staring out of the window. "Oh, it is broken altogether! What shall I do? What can I do?"

She swung about, a strange creature, one flushed with excitement rather than pallid with terror. When she came round, she started violently. Verreker was standing at her shoulder. As she jerked back, the Captain smiled amiably.

"Perhaps I can rig it up again," he said. "I'm not handy, but I think I can fix it."

"It's come right away," the woman objected. "The support and the woodwork have broken. I don't think it can be mended."

"It looks an awful mess," admitted the Captain. He looked up at the splintered woodwork with an amiable but helpless glance. "Still, I suppose it can't be helped."

("Wonder why old Verreker don't suggest hammer and nails," annotated the Lieutenant. He might have said something, but he had been brought up on the doctrine that when a captain holds the boards lieutenants must not bark. Also, old Verreker had been queerish all the evening.)

"But it's dangerous," cried the woman, her bright eyes examining the calm set of his face with sharp and darting glances. She was wondering how long Verreker had been at her shoulder, how much he had seen, if the quick twinkle of light out on the flat plain had caught his eye, and if so, if it had conveyed anything to his mind.

She was believing him thoroughly stupid, thoroughly plastic to her hands under the spell of her beauty, but she was wondering if she were right about him. He had acted as foolishly as other officers of his breed, but there was that quiet strength in his face—even the best of the others had not had that. Was he stupid, was he infatuated? her mind was asking. At once she decided he was.

"Well," he drawled easily, "perhaps it isn't so dangerous. This window faces south. It's clear country south; we came over it today. It'll be all right, I think. The man who lit a cigarette was behind the trench line, you know. That makes all the difference. There are no trenches here, no fighting. It'll be all right, I should say."

He was as stupid as the rest, the woman thought, perhaps more stupid. No wonder the mill-hand away there to the south had been able to evade detection; no wonder his telephone, hidden in the centre of his mill wheel, had not been discovered. No wonder he was able to telephone her signals to the enemy's advance line without interruption. If the whole race were as foolish as this man, they could never hope to find out anything.

She spoke with a touch of confidence that was almost contempt in her voice:

"Well, that doesn't make *me* easier. I am still afraid that my bright window might attract attention. We must eat quickly and go to bed quietly. The quicker the light is out the better."

"Good idea," said the amiable Verreker. "It is just as well to be thoroughly careful. I shouldn't like to lose my patrol. We have, you know, lost rather too many officers' patrols lately."

"Oh!" said the woman, trying to keep in check her scorn.

"We've lost more than is pleasant," said Verreker garrulously. "Three, for instance, during the last fortnight, and all in this district."

The woman was busy bringing platters to the table. Even if the man were looking at her he could not see her face as he spoke.

"All the officers were particular friends of mine. The first was Morel; a fine man Morel, handsome, charming, a bit too chivalrous and courteous, perhaps. He was a tall man; he had a little yellow moustache, and a very white skin. Morel would have been just the type of man you would like to meet, mademoiselle."

("Heavens!" thought the Lieutenant, "what's the matter with Verreker's brain tonight? Why is he dishing up the Family Biography?" What the Lieutenant had failed to see was that the woman had stopped, stopped just for a breathless instant, as she passed from plate-rack to table. But lieutenants are not old enough to notice these things.)

"Morel rode out with his patrol and disappeared completely. So did Vickers—a

plumpish, *debonair*, rosy man, Vickers. The third was my best friend. His name was Agnew, a fine, big creature, with a big moustache, big shoulders, a big laugh, and a big air altogether. Like the other two, he rode out with his men, and vanished. Perhaps he and they are prisoners; perhaps they have been killed. They were all true, fine men. I feel their loss enormously."

"I wonder what happened to them," said the woman.

She tried to keep her voice casual, but there was a tremor in it. Twice, too, she looked up swiftly to the window, and as swiftly looked away. It was coming to her slowly that perhaps she had misjudged this big, lean man; perhaps there was something behind that strong face, something that the settled smile had but served to veil.

"I have wondered, too, mademoiselle," said Verreker slowly. "I have wondered so much that I have set myself to find out. I have gathered together as much information as I could, and I believe I am getting to the bottom of the mystery. Soon, I believe, I shall know."

The woman did not seem to be listening. She was looking out of the window. Out of the window, right across the flat country there had appeared a light. The light winked and danced in a drunken way, and then went out. Another light, at another point, started to life, danced its eerie solo, and expired. Then the woman turned on Verreker.

"Soon!" she cried, with a bitter triumph in her voice, "you will not know soon, for you will know *now*. They were trapped. They were foolish, stupid, vain men. They fell into the trap of vanity. They were caught by a pretty face—my face, M. le Capitaine. My face drew them here into a trap. They were fools, as you were a fool, and they were trapped as you are now trapped."

Heavy, in the dark, there came the abrupt "pit-pot" of a small-bore rifle. On the top of it there was the slash of rifle firing. It was on the plain between the farm and the hills. The sound rang round the house in a ring of shrill sound.

"There is the steel ring of your trap, M. Capitaine. You are surrounded. There is no hope for you, for you cannot escape. We have laid our plans too carefully for that."

Captain Verreker had picked up his sword calmly; he was buckling it on as calmly. There was no hurry, no alarm in his calculated movements. Also he was smiling, though now the smile was as hard as the light in his eyes.

"Nothing of what you tell me is new," he said evenly, clearly, and perfectly. "I have known you for what you are from the first. I have guessed how those patrols were lost from the beginning. The officers were my friends; I knew them well, their virtues—and their weaknesses."

The woman stood back gasping. Through the window she saw the hump-backs of the distant hills take fire. From the crests great arms of bitter white light stood up into the sky; the arms moved, they came lower, and began to sweep the surface of the flat plain with mercilessly unemotional deliberation. As the lights poked about on the floor of the plain the packed thunder of field-guns burst out into the night.

"Searchlights!" gasped the woman. "They never brought searchlights before."

"Nor this time," said Verreker. "Those searchlights are ours, and the guns are ours. On all the hills, all round the house our searchlights and our guns are at work."

"A trap!" cried the woman.

"A trap, mademoiselle, and baited with the same bait as your own—yourself."

He went to the door, and out of it. The woman saw in the path of light the backs of the troopers as they crouched ready and secure under cover of the stout farmyard wall. She saw the machine-gun mounted on its tripod, and the eager men behind it waiting for the signal to go.

As she watched, the pickets came tumbling back to shelter over the wall. The men stiffened. She heard a sergeant shouting "Fifteen rounds, rapid!"

A whistle, like a thread of silver, spun through the air; at once, with a scream of rifles, and the coughing throb of the spitting maxims, the wall round the farm burst into battle.

The enemy's cavalry that had hurried up, at the woman's signal, to catch the patrol, was caught. They stood trapped between the British force on the hills and Verreker's troopers holding the farm. Verreker had planned it all. He was now out with his troopers, directing them in the extermination of the enemy.

Two hours later, when that which remained of the German force was being marched back to the British camp under an escort of bayonets, the batch of prisoners was headed by a woman, a beautiful woman.

She was more closely guarded than the rest. The rest were taken as captives of war; she had been taken as a spy.

On The Brink

The Story of a Girl's Amazing Love.

By T. C. Bridges.

I.

Colonel Richard Wayne knocked the ashes out of his blackened corn cob and, taking a small canvas bag from his pocket, began filling it again with pale-coloured chaff-cut tobacco.

"Sold out, have you, Selby?" he said in his slow Southern drawl, as he turned his head to look at the big, brown-faced young man in the cane chair beside him. "Sold out, have you? I'm real sorry. We haven't so many neighbours that we can afford to lose you. Judith'll be sorry, too."

"I'm sorry myself, Colonel," replied the Englishman frankly. "I shall miss you both badly. But you know I've never even had a trip home since I first started work out here. I'm simply longing to get back. I'm sick of the sun and the sand and the snakes and the mosquitoes, and I've had enough prickly heat and chills and fever to last me a lifetime. D'you know, sometimes I lie awake at nights thinking of a trout stream up on the moors, with the cool wind blowing down the valley and the peat-brown water bubbling among the big rocks."

He broke off with a laugh.

"Great Scott! I'll be turning spring poet soon. But all the same, the thought of getting back to it makes me half crazy with joy."

Colonel Wayne nodded.

"Aye, it's natural enough," he answered. "It's every man to his own country, I reckon. Now, I wouldn't be happy anywhere else than here. I'd be miserable where I couldn't smell the pines, and see the yellow jasmine bloom in the spring. And most of all, I like to sit here on the verandah and look out over the swamp and watch the smoke always rising against the sky, and wonder where it comes from and what it means."

He pointed as he spoke to where, far across the great cypress swamp that covered the lower ground like a black carpet, a column of pale-coloured smoke rose straight up into the deep blue of the Florida sky, then, caught in some upper current, drifted slowly away to the southward.

"It's wonderful, Colonel," agreed Selby. "You'd go far to see a finer view. And like you, I've never looked at that smoke without wondering what makes it, and where it comes from. But the whole thing doesn't appeal to me as it does to you. A swamp is all very well to look at from above, but it's a beastly place to go into, whereas a moor is equally jolly to look at and wander over. And to think that I shall be able to settle on a moor and live there to the end of my days seems almost too good to be true."

"You got a fair price then, I reckon?" remarked the Colonel.

"I did indeed," said Selby, smiling. "I got thirty thousand dollars. Six thousand pounds that is in our money. It isn't a fortune, but it's enough for all I want."

"Jim, you don't mean to say you've sold St. Lucie?" came a voice from just behind them.

Selby sprang up.

"Why, I never heard you, Judith," he said, as he held out his hand to a girl who had just stepped out through the French window. "Take this chair. I'll get another."

The girl took no notice of his offer. She was nearly as tall as Selby, and she stood looking straight into his face with level eyes. It flashed upon Selby that he had never before noticed how wonderfully large and dark they were.

"You don't mean to say that you have sold St. Lucie?" she repeated.

"But, indeed, I have," said Selby, suddenly feeling vaguely uncomfortable. "I had a good offer from the new Development Company, and I closed at once. They treated me well—paid me on the nail. I've actually got the greenbacks in my pocket this minute."

Selby was talking simply for the sake of saying something. There was a look in Judith's face which troubled him. He and she had been tremendous chums ever since the days when he first settled at St. Lucie, and she, a wild little creature in short skirts, used to gallop through his woods on her pony. He knew that he was going to miss her a great deal worse than all the rest of Florida put together.

"And you never told me, Jim!" she exclaimed.

"My dear Judith, I've only just done it. I came straight here to tell you and your father."

"What are you going to do now, then?"

"I—why, I'm going home—back to England."

"Aren't you coming back here any more?"

"Why—er—yes, of course I am, some day."

"When?" asked Judith uncompromisingly.

"My dear child, how can I tell?" answered Selby with a touch of irritation in his voice. "I'm going to buy a little place in England and start trout breeding or something of that sort."

Judith opened her mouth as if to speak, but checked herself. Without another word she turned and went back into the house.

Selby felt thoroughly uncomfortable. He had always looked on Judith as a child. He had not realised that she was nearly nineteen and grown up. Half the joy he had felt in his sudden release from tropical drudgery had vanished. He sat down again, relit his pipe, and made a resolute attempt to go on with his conversation with the Colonel. But it was no use, and presently he gave it up as a bad job and took his leave.

Hannibal, Colonel Wayne's negro servant, brought round the pony, but Selby waited at the gate, hoping that Judith would come out and say good-bye. There was no sign of her, and, feeling curiously uncomfortable, he at last got on his pony and rode off to his lonely bachelor residence.

He slept vilely that night, and rose early next morning, feeling stupid and headachy, but a swim in the cool lake did him good, and after breakfast he set to work with tremendous energy.

This was Tuesday, and he hoped to get away on Thursday and catch a Saturday boat from New York. Naturally, he had no end to do, and he was expecting the Company's agent that afternoon to take over his implements and stock.

One thing rather troubled him. As he had told Judith, he had the whole of the purchase-money in his possession. Some was in bearer bonds, some in greenbacks. He felt that he would be wise to ride over to Pinelake and bank it, but Pinelake was fifteen miles away, and there simply was not time to go there. He comforted himself with the thought that no one but Judith and her father had any notion that he was carrying such a sum about with him, and while he was at work about the place he locked it in the big wooden chest in his bedroom.

When night came he was tired out. Cicero, the elderly negro who did the housework, cooked him an excellent supper, but he was almost too fagged to eat it, and as soon as the man had washed up and gone to his quarters he made up his mind to turn in.

First, however, he opened the chest. The packet lay where he had put it. He took it out, glanced through it to see that all was right, and hesitated whether to put it back or not.

Eventually he decided that it would be safer under his pillow. He placed it there, and took the precaution of laying his pistol beside it.

Then he went out on to the verandah for a last look round. It was a perfect autumn night—warm and still. There was no moon,

but the stars were brilliant. They glowed like lamps, and were mirrored in points of fire on the surface of the lake which slept at the bottom of the steep slope below the house. Beyond rose the black wall of cypress, marking the edge of the great Fenokee swamp, and from the height at which he stood Selby could see plainly the mysterious smoke column rising in a feathery plume and blotting out the stars on the western horizon.

Hundreds and hundreds of times had Selby watched that smoke and wondered at it. No one knew its origin. They called it the Fenokee volcano, and even the oldest settlers could not remember the time when it had failed to appear. It never changed. Sometimes, indeed, on dark nights there was a reflected glow in the cloud as of fire beneath. Attempts had been made to trace its source, but all without effect. The swamp fastness defied the puny powers of man to penetrate it.

As he turned back into the house and closed and locked the door behind him, it occurred to Selby that now he would never know its origin. There was only one more night before him, one more day on the place where he had toiled for so many weary years. Within forty hours he would be speeding northwards in the great through express.

Somehow the thought did not give him the same thrill as it had on the previous morning. The vision of the cool uplands of his native Devon was not so vivid.

"Bah, what a fool I am!" he growled. "I'm fagged out. That's the trouble. I shall be all right in the morning."

Tired as he was, it was some time before he could sleep. He tried to fix his thoughts on England and all his plans for the future. Instead, Judith's face rose before him, always with the look which it had borne when he had last seen it, as she had turned away from him and gone back into the house.

When at last he did drop off, it was into a sleep so deep that he might have been drugged.

II.

It was still dark when he awoke. He found himself sitting bolt upright in bed. Everything was very still, and yet he was under the impression that he had been disturbed by a sound of some sort.

His first thought was for his precious package. He turned up his pillow. Nothing was there. The envelope had gone, and so had his revolver.

For a moment he stared stupidly at the spot. Then with one spring he was out of bed. He looked on the floor on both sides, and under the bed. There was no sign of the package.

The shock was so great that for a moment he stood gasping, unable to collect himself, but only for a moment. With an inarticulate cry he dashed out of his bedroom. It was on the ground floor, next to the sitting-room, which opened straight upon the verandah. The first thing he saw was that the front door stood open.

In three strides he had reached the verandah.

He listened with straining ears. A moment passed; then a tiny sound broke the stillness. It was a slight splash. He looked out across the lake but could see nothing. A fish rising, he thought, and was in the act of turning back into the house when the sound came again.

Again he stared lakewards, and close under the heavy timber on the right-hand bank saw a dark shape glide softly through the heavy shadow.

For the moment he was on the point of rushing out just as he stood, in pyjamas and bare-footed. But he realised that it would be madness. He dashed back, and pulled on a pair of thick field boots, flung on a coat and cap, picked up his gun and stuffed half-a-dozen cartridges into his pocket. Then he slipped out by the back way, and ran.

He had got hold of himself again. Body and brain were all alert. He meant to have his money or the thief's life—perhaps both.

A glance at the little dock below the garden showed that it was his own boat which the thief had taken. Selby's first thought was to go back for his pony, but it was bad ground on the far side of the lake between it and the swamp. Besides, the man would hear the horse galloping. He decided to go afoot, and, turning off to the right, started to run.

The shore of the lake was bordered with dense thicket; he had to go behind this and fetch a circle through the pine forest. By doing so he lost sight of the boat, but on the other hand the thief could not see him.

The question was whether he could catch the man on landing. Elbows close to his sides, drawing long deep breaths, he ran as he had never run since his school days.

Below the pines was sand, with an undergrowth of thick wire grass and scrub palmetto—ugly ground for pace—and soon Selby was streaming at every pore. The distance

was about a mile. It seemed double, and when at last he gained the edge of the boggy flat, which lay between the lake shore and the swamp, he could see no sign of the boat.

He hesitated. The thief might have suspected pursuit, and be lurking in the bay-head, or he might have changed his course, and be making round the shore for the western corner of the lake. This seemed more probable, for a creek ran out in that direction, navigable for small boats.

While Selby stood, trying to make up his mind what was best to do, there came a rustle among the palmettoes out on the flat in front.

He checked the impulse to make a rush. It was growing a little lighter, and he wanted to be quite sure that it was the thief and not some wild creature. He stood perfectly still, hardly breathing, straining his eyes for a sight of the sound maker.

There was a little space about a hundred yards in front, a patch of ground too boggy for palmettoes, and covered only with long grass. Next moment a negro slipped out of the thicket to the left, peered cautiously first in one direction, then in the other, and moved out into the open, travelling in the direction of the swamp.

Selby could have shouted with triumph. He had him now. The thief had given himself away. Not only was he on boggy ground where he could not run, but he was boxed between the lake and the swamp.

What he was doing there? Why was he moving straight towards the swamp? Selby did not stop to consider. It was enough that the man had got himself into a situation from which he could not escape.

Deliberately Selby waited until the negro had crossed the open patch and entered the palmettoes nearest the edge of the swamp. Then he followed.

He moved as quietly as he knew how. What he wanted was to catch the fellow unawares. Once the thief realised that he was being pursued it would be easy enough for him to fling away his booty into the thick cover, and, if caught, protest his innocence.

Selby had done a deal of shooting during the past seven years, but never had he trailed a buck with such care as he used now in hunting this thief.

The latter, no doubt, thinking himself safe from pursuit, used no particular caution. The palmetto leaves, rustling harshly as he forced his way through them, gave plain indication of his passage. Like a stoat on the trail of a rabbit, Selby crept vengefully on his track.

The negro made straight for the swamp Selby thought it was for the purpose of hiding his spoil. All the same, he was surprised, for negroes are notoriously superstitious, and, as a rule, it was impossible to get one to go near the Fenokee swamp. All believed that the smoke had some supernatural origin.

This man, at any rate, was superior to the fears of the rest of his race, for presently he passed right through the palmettoes, and vanished into the black depth beyond.

Selby himself had never set foot inside the swamp. Indeed, he had always understood that there was no way in. He was astonished to find the ground as sound as it actually was.

Under the immense canopy of cypress, with their wide-spreading branches thickly hung with trails of grey Spanish moss, it was still intensely dark. The faint dawn light was not strong enough to penetrate into these gloomy recesses, and Selby had to travel by sound alone.

Every few moments he was obliged to stop and listen. Soon he realised that the thief was gaining. The sound of steps grew fainter.

Selby's confidence left him, and he began to get seriously worried. He had absolutely counted on cornering the man, and now it seemed there was nothing to stop him—that he was going straight away into the heart of the swamp. He wished devoutly that he had made a rush earlier.

The further he went the more he regretted not having done so. Evidently the man knew the ground, and the sound of his steps was dying out in the distance.

Selby dared not go faster. He could not see the perils which surrounded him, but he knew that they were there. At any moment he might plunge into one of the deep stagnant bayous which wound sluggishly in and out among the dense timber, or he might fall into some mud hole from which escape would be impossible.

Mosquitoes rose in humming hordes, covering his head and hands and biting savagely; the sour smell of the rotting stuff beneath his feet was poisonous in its intensity; trailing creepers armed with huge spiked thorns tore his clothes, and the air was so thick and sultry that he panted for breath.

Yet his resolution never failed for a moment, and he pressed straight onwards, still guided by the occasional snap of a rotten stick under the feet of his enemy.

One thing only was in his favour. The light was increasing. He could not see one inch of sky, but the darkness was changing to a dull twilight. In the outer world the sun, no doubt, was above the horizon.

As his surroundings grew clearer he made a strange discovery, which was that he was travelling along a distinct track. It was very rough, a mere trail that wound in and out among the monstrous cypress and red-trunked bays, yet undoubtedly it had been made by man.

Strange weed growths covered it, tough bamboo vines trailed across it, here and there it dipped into black morasses where the spongy ground quaked beneath his feet. Yet it was always distinct enough to follow, and all the way was marked with human footsteps.

He set his teeth and quickened his pace. It mattered little now whether the other heard him or not. He would follow him, if necessary, to the central fire itself.

In after time Selby could recall little of that fierce pursuit; one or two incidents only impressed themselves upon his brain. He remembered almost treading upon a thick stump-tailed snake, the colour of copper, and smashing its head with his gun butt. He recollected crossing a rotten tree trunk which spanned the bottomless depths of a black, slimy creek, where an enormous alligator lay motionless beneath the perilous bridge and watched him with evil unwinking eyes as he made the passage.

At last the ground began to rise slightly and the path became firmer under his feet. He left the cypresses behind, and found himself among immense bays, magnolias, and live oaks. These were not so thick as in the lower swamp, so the light grew stronger, and here and there a shaft of sunshine set motes of dust dancing in the gloom.

Selby slackened his pace. He had long lost all sign of the negro; it was an hour at least since he had last heard a stick crack. But, even so, he felt that caution was wise. The man might have left the path, and be lurking among the thick cabbage palmettoes which grew in masses under the taller timber.

So he went on for another mile or more.

Suddenly he fancied that he heard a sound to the left. He pulled up short, with his finger on the trigger of his gun.

At that moment something fell upon his head from behind, striking him with such stunning force that he dropped in a heap, senseless and motionless.

III.

When he came again to his senses he was lying flat on his back on a hard floor. He felt desperately tired, his mouth was like dry leather, and his head ached hideously. Just at first he had a vague impression that he had been the victim of some ghastly nightmare, and he lay still with his eyes closed trying to collect his scattered wits.

At last, with an effort, he opened his eyes, but the light was so dim that it was with difficulty that he could make out his surroundings. At once he realised that they were strange. He was lying on the clay floor of a small bare shack; the door was closed, an old sack hung over the window, the air was thick and stuffy, and filled with a pungent smell of smoke.

He tried to get up, but found that his ankles were fastened together with a length of rope. His hands, too, were tied. He was quite helpless.

For a moment terror almost mastered him, and he struggled violently. But gradually he got hold of himself and, finding that he could not wriggle free, lay quite still, resolved to save his strength and wait for what might happen.

He had not long to wait. Presently came a sound of footsteps, the door swung open, and there appeared in the opening a huge negro, black as pitch and with a face resembling that of an Obi idol. Behind was another, smaller man.

Selby lay quite still watching them from under half-closed eyes, pretending to be insensible.

"I reckon he's dead," said the big nigger, speaking in the thick woolly voice of his race. "Yo' hit him mighty hard, Scipio." He crossed over as he spoke and stirred Selby's body with the toe of his huge boot.

"He's not dead," answered the man named Scipio. "Look, yo' can see him breathing. What you gwine to do wid him, Josh?"

"Put him in de pit," said the first big man shortly.

"But dere'll be a terrible fuss 'bout dat," replied Scipio. "All de white folk'll want to know what's come ob him."

"Dey can want," said Josh brutally. "Dey'll nebber look for him in here, dat's one thing shuah."

A thrill that was as much anger as fear shot through Selby. These brutes were evidently discussing his cold blooded assassination. It was clear that they were renegades of some sort—probably fugitives from

He recollected crossing a rotten tree trunk which spanned the bottomless depths of a black, slimy creek, where an enormous alligator lay motionless beneath the perilous bridge.

one of the convict camps who had found this refuge in the heart of the swamp. The mere fact that he had penetrated to their secret retreat was quite enough to seal his death warrant.

"Don't yo' forget dere's some dat knows de way in," returned Scipio cautiously.

"Dey won't say nothin'," answered Josh, with a short laugh. "Dey's too much to lose by blabbing. Anyways, Black Ned lef' de man's boat a-floating upside down in de lake. Dey'll tink he went out fishing and got drowned. I tell yo', Scipio, I ain't agwine to take no chances. I'se gwine to put him into de pit right away."

"Won't yo' wait till de oders comes back?"

"What's de use ob dat? De sooner it's done de better. Yo' help me carry him."

It was all Selby could do to contain himself as the two negroes picked him up. His very flesh crept as the huge hands of Josh seized him under the arms. The animal-like odour of the man made him sick. But he knew that, fastened hand and foot, he was absolutely helpless in their clutches, and that any attempt at resistance would not only be useless, but would only end in their knocking him on the head.

He hung limp as a dead man as they carried him out of the hut.

Outside, the first thing of which he became aware was that, although it was still broad day, a thick haze of smoke obscured the sky. It occurred to him that he was at last on the verge of solving the problem of the mysterious smoke cloud, and he thought grimly that it would probably be the last problem he ever solved.

The path ran through a small clearing planted with sweet potatoes and Indian corn, and three or four other huts were in view. The clearing was bounded by a belt of low, stunted scrub. Beyond it a monstrous cloud of dun vapour mounted slowly into the air and drifted back overhead. He fancied he heard a faint crackling sound.

"De pit am busy to-day," grunted Scipio.

"It'll be busier soon," answered Josh, with his ugly chuckle.

The path ran on through the clearing into the scrub. As his bearers pushed their way through the thick growth, Selby's heart was beating so hard that it seemed the negroes must hear it.

His brain worked furiously, wildly seeking any idea that offered a possibility of escape. So far as he could see, there existed absolutely none. His one hope was that at the last moment he might be able to drag one of his gaolers down with him into the pit.

The scrub thinned, vanished, and they were out on a parched waste many acres in extent. In the centre lay a wide, crater-like hole from which the smoke arose. Even now Selby was unable to tell what caused it—whether real volcanic action or merely the slow combustion of lignite or some similarly inflammable material.

The heat was intense, and the dry soil crackled under the feet of his bearers. A stinging, suffocating gust blew down upon them, making the two negroes cough and choke.

"De wind am settin' dis way. We'll hab to go round," grunted Josh.

"I can't carry this man much furder," retorted Scipio sourly.

"Den lay him down awhile, and get yo' breath."

They did so, and, as the smoke blew over again blindingly, Selby made a last desperate effort to get his hands free.

Scipio saw him.

"Watch out, Josh! He ain't dead! He's trying to get his hands loose!"

"I'll mighty soon stop dat!" growled the big man, with an oath, and whipped out a knife.

Selby, helpless on the ground, set his teeth. His end had come. Anyhow, it was better than being flung alive into the burning pit.

A sharp report broke the stillness. Josh with the knife actually raised to strike, turned half round, stood quite still for a second or two, and fell at full length with a crash that sent the dust flying.

Scipio stared stupidly for an instant; then, with a hoarse scream, he turned and ran.

He had not taken three steps before the unseen rifle spoke again. Up went his arms, and he stumbled forward and pitched on his face.

"Jim! Oh, Jim! have they hurt you?"

Again Selby believed he was dreaming, for the voice was Judith's. But it was Judith herself who came flying through the smoke towards him, outdistancing Hannibal, who, rifle in hand, panted at her heels.

"You, Judith?" said Selby stupidly. Then everything swam before his eyes and disappeared in a dancing mist.

When, for the second time that day, consciousness returned to him, he was lying in the shade of a tree. His arms and legs were free, and Judith bathed his wounded head with water.

Her dress was torn by brambles, her face was white and drawn, and there was a look in her eyes which Selby had never seen before.

"Judith, you're wonderful!" he said admiringly. "How did you manage it? How on earth did you ever find me?"

"Never mind that now," she said curtly. "We must get back at once—before the others come. Can you walk?"

"I'm all right," declared Selby, and scrambled hastily to his feet. He reeled and would have fallen if she had not flung an arm round him.

For a moment the two stood side by side, the girl supporting the man. Then the giddiness passed, and suddenly Selby turned and kissed her.

"Don't!" she cried sharply. There was such pain in her voice that Selby stared stupidly.

"I'm sorry, Judith," he muttered. "I—I——"

"Oh, don't talk! Come on if you can."

Just then Hannibal came up with more water.

"Yo' drink some ob dis, sah, an' yo'll feel better," he advised.

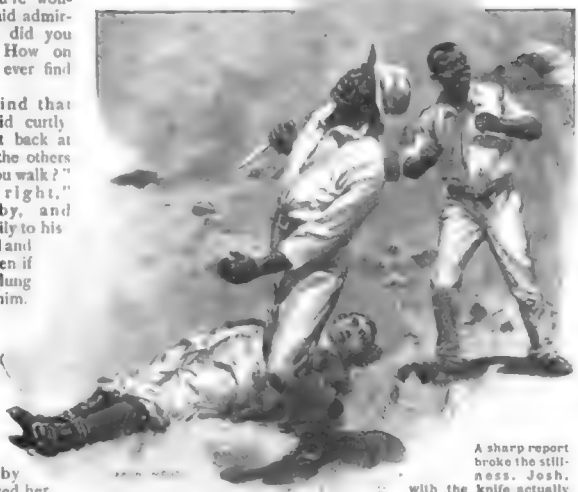
The water was cool and infinitely refreshing. Selby felt his strength and senses returning.

"But my money, Judith—my money? It was stolen from me. I was chasing the thief."

"I know. It's safe. Hannibal has it."

"It's all heah, sah," said Hannibal, tapping his pocket. "I got him all right. Yo' come along now if yo're able and don't make no more noise dan yo' can help."

Nobody molested them on their long tramp back through the great swamp. The path was so narrow that they had to walk in single file. Hannibal led the way, Judith walked next, and Selby last.



A sharp report broke the stillness. Josh, with the knife actually raised to strike, turned half round . . . and fell **at full length.**

More than once Selby tried to talk, but Judith hardly gave him a word in reply, and long before he got home, he was so utterly done that he could not even wonder at the reason of her strange silence.

Arrived at last at St. Lucie, Hannibal helped Selby's own man, Cicero, to put him to bed, and Judith, having seen that all was right in the house, went away without even saying good-bye.

On Wednesday morning, with the sun high in the sky, Selby awoke, and except that he felt somewhat stiff and sore, he was his own man again. Poor old Cicero, who had been fearfully upset by the events of the previous day, appeared overjoyed at the way his master polished off eggs and fresh bread and coffee.

The very minute breakfast was over, Selby saddled his pony, and with his precious envelope safe in his pocket, rode off to the Waynes'. He felt so anxious to see Judith and hear how she had managed his

rescue, that he was quite oblivious of anything else.

As he neared the house he saw her coming out. On the soft sand his horse's hoofs made no sound and he was almost on her before she heard him.

As she glanced up and saw him there came upon her face the same look of mingled fear and misery that he had seen on the previous day when he had kissed her. The look cut Selby to the heart.

"Judith, Judith dear, what is it?" he cried, and springing out of the saddle ran towards her.

She flung up her arms as if to ward him off.

"No, go away, Jim. I can't bear it," she said thickly.

"I don't know what you're talking about, Judith," answered Selby. "I'm not going away until I know what all this means. You saved my life yesterday, and you can't prevent my thanking you."

"I saved your life!" she exclaimed looking at him with tragic eyes. "I nearly killed you. That's what you mean."

Selby drew his hand across his forehead in a bewildered fashion.

"Look here, Judith, are you crazy, or am I? Why do you talk like this?"

"Because it's the truth," she burst out. "Oh, I may as well tell you. You can't think any worse of me than I do of myself. It was I who stole your money. At least, I planned it, which is the same thing—planned it with Black Ned, who is Hannibal's brother. He played me false. He was to have brought it to me, but he ran away with it. Everything went wrong. I never meant it to be taken away into the swamp like that, or for you to go into the swamp after it."

"You planned it? What on earth do you mean, Judith?" demanded Selby, hopelessly bewildered.

"Do you want the whole story?" asked Judith recklessly. "Well, you shall have it, then. I shall never see you again after to-day, so perhaps it doesn't matter. Can't you understand that I didn't want you to go away? I thought that if you hadn't the money you'd stay on here. I——"

"Stop," said Selby. "Stop, Judith. Don't say another word. It's I who ought to get down on my knees and beg your pardon. I've been a blind fool, thinking of nothing but the beastly money. Ah, forgive me, dear. I loved you all the time, and never knew it."

"No, no. It's only because you're sorry for me. Keep away, Jim. I won't, I can't——"

"You will and you can," said Selby with extraordinary firmness, and before she could escape his arms were round her.

For a moment she struggled fiercely, but Selby knew instinctively that he must not let her go. He held her firmly, and all of a sudden her struggles ceased, and she was sobbing out her heart on his shoulder.

THOUGHTS ON QUARTER DAY.

I would I were a little lamb
A-frisking in the pasture,
And then I shouldn't have to dash
The bills contracted last year.

I would I were a little fish,
A sardine, for example:
I wouldn't rent a house like this,
A small tin would be ample.

I would I were a rod or perch,
Or e'en a humble bloater;
I'd lose my sidesmanship at church
And not be on the rota.

I would I could assume at will
The semblance of a spectre,
I'd sit upon the window-sill
And scare the tax-collector.

I would my nose, just like a whale's,
Shot water in a mass so;
I'd store about a million pails
And go and see the Gas Co.

I would some chemist near at hand
For my complaint would cater;
I want to die at present, and
Resume existence later.

H. R. Simpson.

A WHISHT JOB.

O! Bill's aboard a brigantine that's bound for Barcelona,
An' Molly to Trewinnick Farm be mortal fond of he,
An' I've been mazed for Molly all the years as I have known her,
So isn' it a whisht job all along o' we?

O! Bill's aboard the brigantine and mebbe never carin'
That Molly keeps his pictur' on the mantel for to see,
An' I've got Molly's ribbon that her lost one day to fairm';
O! isn' it a whisht job with Molly, Bill, an' me?

When Bill comes home from furrin parts he've money mos amazin',
An' Molly, like the rest o' them, do think a dale of he,
Whiles 'tisn' much to farmin' as I be likely raisin',
So isn' it a whisht job down along o' me?

Supposen Bill stayed home along, an' I went out a-roamin'
Whi e Bill were jest a farmin' hand, I wonder how 'twould be?
Would Molly see things different an' alter in her choosin'?
Or would it be a whishter job all along o' we?

O! one an' none be happy times, if 'ee've the sense to know it,
An' one an' one be gladdest times, if one an' one agree;
But one an' two be turble times, as us so plain do show it,
O! isn' it a whisht job with Molly, Bill, an' me?

Bernard Moore.

ORLANDO—A MINSTREL.

He lived far away,
This minstrel gay,
In a land where the skies are blue;
And all day long he sang of love—
('Tis a thing all minstrels do).

Of a ladye fayre
Beyond compare
Enamoured Orlando grew;
Her praise he'd sing in lovesick lay—
('Tis a thing all minstrels do).

"For love I'll die!"
His tuneful cry—
And when she proved untrue,
To another maid he sang the song—
('Tis a thing all minstrels do).

P. M. Dean.

* * * * *

THE FEMININE OF CHIEF.

They were discussing the North American Indian the other day in a rural school, when the teacher asked if anyone could tell him what the leaders were called?

"Chief," answered a bright little girl at the head of the class.

"Correct!" answered the teacher. "Now, can any of you tell me what the women are called?"

There was silence for a minute or two, then a small boy was seen waving his hand aloft, eager to reply.

"Well, Tommy?" asked the teacher.

"Mischief," he announced proudly.

* * *

NOT IN HER LINE.

An interested visitor who was making a call in the tenement district said on departing:

"Well, my good woman, I must go now. Is there anything I can do for you?"

"No, thank ye, ma'am," replied the submerged one. "Ye mustn't mind if I don't return the call, will ye? I haven't any time to go slummin' meself."

THE NIGGER: "Bless my soul! Dere's a swallow. Spring is here."
THE LION: "Quite right, sonny! There's a spring and a swallow here."

SLIGHTING THE CANTEEN.

During the recent fighting along the banks of the Aisne a man was badly wounded. The Ambulance Corps placed him tenderly on a stretcher.

"Take him to the hospital," said the man in charge.

Slowly the wounded man opened his eyes and whispered faintly:

"What's the matter with the canteen?"

* * *

SO THOUGHTFUL!

HE: "I've bought you a pet monkey to amuse you, darling."

SHE: "Oh, how kind of you! Now I shan't miss you while you're away."

TOMMY: "I tell ye it's the Russian flag."
JIMMY: "Tell ye it ain't; it's the French flag."
TOMMY: "'Ow do ye know?"
JIMMY: "My farver said it was, an' 'e oughter know; 'e's a French polisher."

WANTED, A SPEEDY RISE!

YOUNG WRITER: "What magazine will give me the highest position quickest?"

LITERARY FRIEND: "A powder magazine, if you send in a fiery article."

* * * * *

BEFORE HER TIME.

Little Alice came into the house at luncheon time with a pair of very dirty hands. Her mother looked at them and said reprovingly:

"You never saw my hands as dirty as yours."

"No, mother," replied the child, "but grandmother did."

* * * * *

GAME TO THE END.

A large dredging-machine was at work at the Liverpool landing-stage clearing the space in the river Mersey to allow the great Atlantic liners to come alongside for the landing of cargo and passengers.

A country tripper was watching the numerous buckets and machinery with wide-open mouth. Several times his friends urged him to "Coome," but he might have been alone for what little notice he took of them.

At last his wife pulled his arm and said: "Coome, Alf, we'll miss t' train."

"Na," said Alf, "I'm goin' ter see las' bucket up."

CONGENIAL WORK.

"Now," said the warder to the forger who had just arrived at the prison, "we'll set you to work. What can you do best?"

"Well, if you'll give me a week's practice on your signature, I'll sign your official papers for you," said the prisoner.

* * * * *

ADVICE, GRATIS!

The proprietor of the second-hand shop was not so tidy as he might have been. One day while standing in front of the shop an Irishman approached and asked: "Hov yez anny clean shirts in yer shop?"

"Of course I have," answered the clothing man, anxious for a sale. "Lots of them, as clean as anything."

"Well," said the Irishman, moving away, "go and put wan of them on."

* * * * *

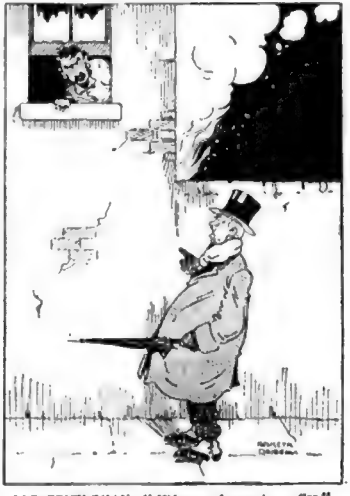
A COSTLY CURIO.

A Scottish lady, who was spending her holidays in London, entered a *bric-à-brac* shop in search of something odd to take home to Scotland with her. After she had inspected several articles, but had found none to suit her, she noticed a quaint figure, the head and shoulders of which appeared above the counter.

"What is that Japanese idol over there worth?" she inquired of the salesman.

The salesman's reply was given in a subdued tone.

"Worth about half-a-million, madam; that's the proprietor!"



OLD GENTLEMAN: "Hi! your house is on fire."
"Oo 'ome! It ain't my 'ouse—I'm the lodger."

CYCLES FOR HIRE.

At a concert for charity in a country town, Miss Carter obliged by reciting "The Village Blacksmith." At the conclusion of her recitation the rural audience cheered.

"Ancower!" they cried. "Ancower!"

Miss Carter was about to grant the request when a burly fellow very much out of breath tapped her on the shoulder.

"I've just come round from in front," whispered the man excitedly. "I want yer to do me a favour."

"Well, what is it?" queried Miss Carter.

"It's this," whispered the intruder. "I happen ter be the feller yer've been talking about, and I want yer to put in a verse this time saying as how I let out bicycles."

* * *

RULED OUT!

James, who was four years old, had been naughty to the point of evoking a whipping from his long-suffering mother, and all day long a desire for revenge rankled in his little bosom. At length bedtime came, and, kneeling at her knee, he implored a blessing for each member of the family individually except her.

Then, rising from his devout posture, the little supplicant fixed a keenly triumphant look upon her face, saying, as he turned to climb into bed:

"I s'pose you noticed you wasn't in it?"

* * * * *

FIND THE PRINTER!

The professor was delivering the final lecture of the term. He dwelt with much emphasis on the fact that each student should devote the intervening time preparing for the final examinations.

"The examination papers are now in the hands of the printer. Are there any questions to be asked?"

Silence prevailed. Suddenly a voice from the rear inquired: "Who's the printer?"

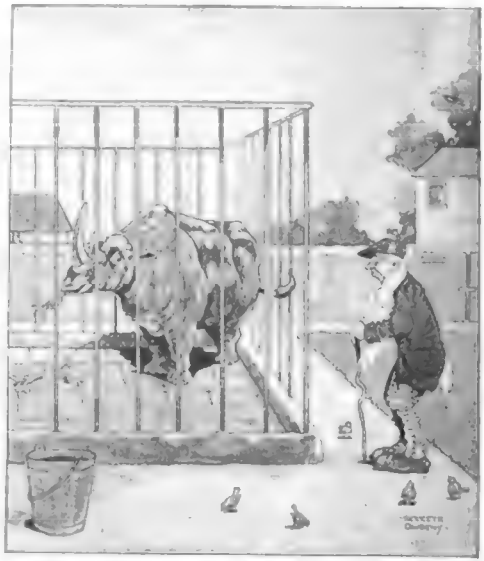
NOT INDISPENSABLE.

They were on their honeymoon, and were spending it amongst the mountains of Switzerland. Nearly every day they attempted to climb to a fresh height.

Flushed with triumph, parched, and scant of breath, they had at last gained the summit of a lofty peak. Then they paused.

"There!" exclaimed the wife when she had finished panting. "We have tramped all this distance to admire this beautiful view and we've forgotten the glasses."

"Never mind, darling," replied the husband, taking a small flask out of his pocket. "There's no one about. We can drink as well out of the bottle."



COUNTRY GENTLEMAN (who has lunched): "That's all rot! There ain't no such hanimal—an' even if there was 'ee wouldn't be eatin' carrots."

* * *

NO LACK OF CLASPS.

A great lady was visiting some military hospitals in India, and was so delighted with what she saw that she exclaimed:

"I think the nurses deserve a medal for this campaign as much as anyone, and I hope they will get one."

"I don't know about a medal," said a witty officer who was in attendance, "but they are sure to get plenty of clasps!"

* * *

A GREAT ATTRACTION.

LADY: "I want to put in this advertisement for a cook. It will go in three lines, won't it?"

CLERK: "No, madam, we'll have to charge you for four lines, but you can put in four more words if you wish."

LADY: "Very well, then. Say 'Policeman stationed opposite corner.'"

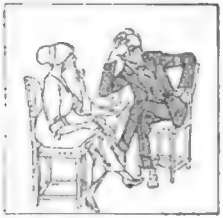
* * * * *

STARTING AT THE BOTTOM.

DOWAGER: "So you are commencing a practice here? You're rather young, aren't you?"

YOUNG MEDICO: "Oh—er—well, I only expect to start on children first, you know."

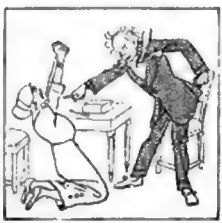
NOVEL DEVELOPMENTS AND THEIR STARTLING SEQUEL.



1. Mr. Thriller decides to dictate his new novel to a shorthand-typist——

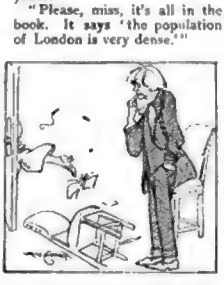
2. ——and, starting off in excellent style, is soon carried away by his own eloquence.

3. His excitement increases until, reaching the most thrilling part, his impassioned manner terrifies the unfortunate typist——



4. ——who, thinking her last hour has come, falls on her knees and begs for mercy.

5. In his frenzy he seizes the paper-cutter, whereat the typist snatches up a chair——



6. ——and finally makes a dash for the door, leaving Mr. Thriller cured for ever of the desire to dictate his effusions.

NATURAL SOLICITUDE.

He was a smart fellow, or at least he thought he was, and he was on a visit to a town in Lancashire, known locally as Monkey Town.

On the road he met an old man, a native of the town, and thinking to have a joke at his expense, said:

"Hullo! did you see a cartload of monkeys pass along here just now?"

"No, laddie," replied the old man; "has tha fallen oot?"

* * *

PRESENT TIME.

He was gazing with dreamy eyes into the distance.

"Ah! my darling," he murmured, "what matters it that sorrow and trouble must of necessity be lurking in the unknown future? While I am with you I think of naught but the present—the beautiful, superb present."

"So do I, dearest," she replied, "but you'll take me with you when you buy it, won't you? Men have such queer taste in rings."

DOUBLING THE CAPE.

A furrier recently sent the shop-boy to the back part of the establishment to bring forward a certain cape. After some time the youngster returned with the article, neatly folded up, and was greeted with:

"Well, you've got back at last, have you? You've been gone long enough to sail from South America."

"Well, sir," said the lad as he modestly showed his burden, "I did double the cape."

HARD TO FOLLOW.

"I am glad to find you better," said a physician to a famous comedian upon paying him a professional visit one morning. "You followed my prescription, of course?"

"Indeed I did not, doctor," retorted the sick man, "or I should have broken my neck."

"Broken your neck!" exclaimed the doctor in amazement.

"Yes," said the other, "for I threw your prescription out of the window."

* * *

A DENSE POPULATION!

A teacher one day asked her class to write an essay on London, about which they had just been reading. When examining their papers later she was surprised to read the following:

"The people of London are noted for their stupidity."

"Where did you get that from?" asked she of Maggie Jones.

"Please, miss, it's all in the book. It says 'the population of London is very dense.'"

IN ORDER OF PRECEDENCE.

It was the polite Frenchman's first visit to a party in England, and he was very anxious to do the right thing, so when the hostess advanced to welcome him he gallantly saluted the astonished lady with a hearty kiss. Unfortunately, her husband was a witness of the occurrence.

"How dare you, sir, take the liberty of kissing my wife, and before me, too?" was his indignant exclamation.

"One thousand pardons!" exclaimed the polite foreigner. "I do not know your English customs. Next time I kees you first."

• • •

OVERHEAD CAMELS.

A circus proprietor recently ordered a large advertising poster of his show to be printed, and objected because there was so much clear sky in it.

"I ain't a-goin' to advertise the sky," he said to the lithographer. "I paid you to advertise my show. Draw a few camels and stick them up in the 'eavenly blue. I ain't a-goin' to have all that good space run to waste."

• • •

A GENERAL INVITATION.

GENERAL SERVANT: "If you please, mum, may I have a 'oliday?"

MISTRESS: "Why, Jane, you have had a fortnight's holiday this year already."

SERVANT: "Yes, mum, but the baker tells me that the Government gents. is sending generals out to France, their fares is paid by the taxes, and I thought the sea-trip would do me good, mum."

• • •

THE COLD SHOULDER.

CUSTOMER: "D'you mean to tell me you've cuts to suit all purses?"

BUTCHER: "Why, yes."

CUSTOMER: "Then what have you got to suit an empty purse?"

BUTCHER: "The cold shoulder, ma'am!"

• • • • •

QUITE UNPRINCIPLED.

COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER: "If a man has an income of two millions a year, what is his principal?"

CYNIC: "A man with such an income usually has no principle."

"Oh, bird, why do you linger
So long upon my finger?"
"The finger is so very nice
I feel a Bird of Paradise,
Though artist's skill could not avail
To place on me the proper tail!"

A FAIR EXCHANGE.

The military manœuvres were in progress. All the afternoon the attackers had attacked, and the defenders defended, with conspicuous lack of incident. Operations were beginning to drag horribly, when the white flag went up.

The officer in command of the attackers stared in amazement.

"A flag of truce!" he exclaimed. "What do they want?"

The sergeant-major endeavoured to cover up a smile.

"They say, sir," he reported, "that as it's tea-time they'd like to exchange a couple of Territorials for a tin of condensed milk — if you can spare it!"

• • •

TRANS-PARENT.

"Mamma," said the little girl, "what does trans-atlantic mean?"

"Across the Atlantic, of course," said her mother sharply. "But don't bother me with questions just now. Can't you see I am very busy writing?"

There was a few seconds' silence. Then:

"Mamma, does 'trans' always mean 'across'?"

"Of course it does! But," threatened her mother, "if you don't stop bothering me with your questions I shall send you straight to bed. Now, remember."

Again a few seconds' silence.

"Then I suppose," commented the child, "that 'transparent' means a cross parent."

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STRIKING A MATCH.

PAPA (from the next room): "Ethel, aren't you going to light the gas in there?"

ETHEL: "Yes, papa, we were just speaking of—er—striking a match."

• • • • •

PROOF POSITIVE.

"Johnnie," said the teacher, "give me three proofs that the world is actually round."

"Yes'm," said Johnnie cheerfully; "the book says so, you say so, and ma says so."

• • • • •

A WEIGHTY BUSINESS.

The coal merchant, it was mentioned, had accumulated a fortune.

"No wonder," said one of the company, "look how long he's been lying in weight for it."

NOT HER WAY.

The moving picture director was having trouble in getting one of the scenes right. The girl was supposed to resist an attempt to kiss her, but the rehearsal was far from satisfactory.

"Think, now," said the director, coaching her; "haven't you ever tried to stop a young man from kissing you?"

"No," was the girl's frank reply.

• • •

LIGHTS OUT!

A pompous manufacturer of machinery was showing a stranger over his factory.

"Fine piece of work, isn't it?" he said as they were looking at a very ingenious machine.

"Yes," said the visitor, "but you can't hold a candle to the goods we're turning out."

"Indeed!" said the chagrined manufacturer; "and what is your line?"

"Gunpowder," was the reply.

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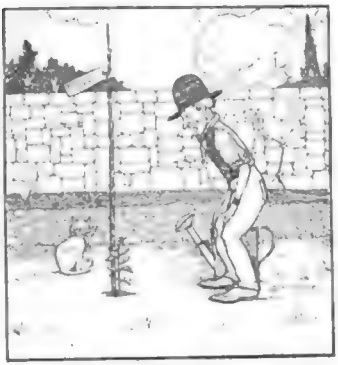
ONE IN RESERVE.

MISTRESS: "I see that another soldier has called for you, Mary; I thought you only had one sweetheart."

COOK: "Oh, no, mum, two; you see, one's a regular and the other's a reserve."



THE JOBBING GARDENER: "Success at last!"

"Am I?" said Kathleen resentfully. "You said yesterday I was a little pig!"

• • • • •

MORE THAN HE EXPECTED.

The policeman was holding up the motorist. "Your car was going at forty-five miles an hour," he said.

"What?" exclaimed the motorist enthusiastically; "that's splendid. The makers only guaranteed forty!"

STARVED OUT.

"Healthy?" said the proud resident. "I should say this town is healthy. Why, there's only been one death here in ten years."

"Indeed!" replied the visitor. "And may I ask who it was that died?"

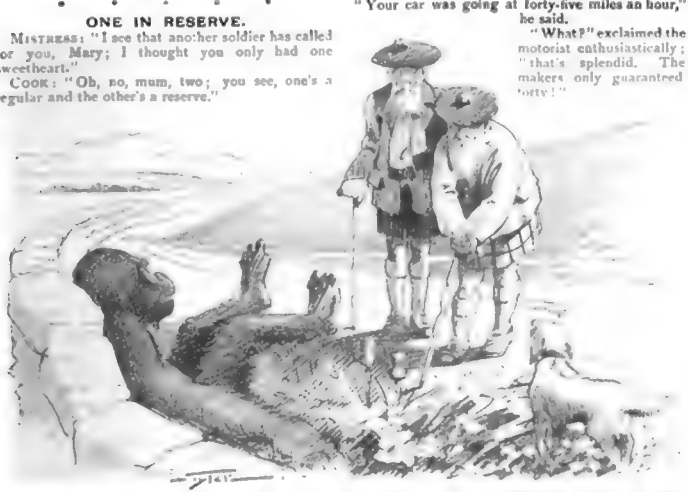
"Our doctor; he died of starvation."

• • •

SO CONFUSING!

The five-year-old daughter of a well-known humorous writer appeared one morning at the breakfast table with suggestions of a cold beginning to manifest itself upon her.

"Why, Kathleen," said the father, "you are a little hoarse."



A travelling menagerie had penetrated to a remote district in the Scotch Highlands, and the gorilla dying, he was left by the roadside, where he was found next day by two natives. Neither of them had ever seen such a creature before, and were loud in their exclamations of astonishment. At last: "It's no' a Macintosh, an' it's no' a Cameron," said one; "let's go up an' see if any of the English visitors at the Castle are missing."

PICTURE PARAGRAPHS

The Editor will be Pleased to Purchase Photographs of an Interesting and Out-of-the-Way Nature. All Photographs should be Accompanied by a Short Description.

Photo *E. N. Hoyt.*

A handsome black cat who surveys the heavens with all the keenness of an Anti-Aircraft watcher.

LOOKING FOR ZEPPELINS.

This handsome black cat is evidently on the look-out for Zeppelins, but none have yet come his way.

FEET OFF!

In these days of expert photography, it is not unusual, given a suitable lens, to get a picture of a race-horse when all four feet are in the air. It needs a very rapid exposure, however, to snap two horses trotting alongside, with all their feet entirely off the ground.

The two horses in the picture were photographed while racing on a California track, and, as can be seen, not one of their feet is touching mother earth.

Photo *By Courtesy of Popular Mechanics.*

These two trotters were snapped while racing in California, and at the moment when not one of their feet was touching the ground.

FEEDING A REFRACTORY PYTHON.

When Czarina, the 25-foot python at the New York Zoo, refused to eat and had to be forcibly fed, it took three keepers to do the job. Her long body was kept taut, her jaws opened, and four rabbits rammed down her throat by means of a bamboo pole.

The reptile was then replaced in her cage, where a stream of water, played along her body from a hose-pipe, roused her to anger, and was efficacious in inducing her to swallow the rabbits.

Photo. [illegible]

Even pythons require forcible feeding at times. Here is Czarina, an inmate of the New York Zoo, making a reluctant meal.

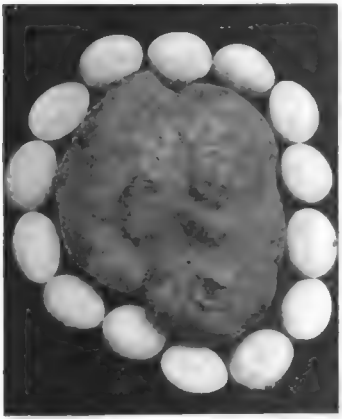


Photo. [illegible]

A potato from Bedfordshire which weighed 5 lb. 11 ozs., and required 14 eggs to go round it.

REALLY THE LARGEST POTATO.

This potato was grown in Bedfordshire, and turned the scale at five pounds eleven ounces. It measured 9¼ in. long, 7½ in. across, and 4½ in. in thickness. Fourteen hens' eggs of ordinary size were required to go round the potato.

MIDGETS FROM INDIA.

This quaint little couple were photographed on the platform of a railway station in India. The man, who rejoices in the name of Sivasankara Mudabar, was 26 years of age, and his wife 21 years old.

They come from totally different families, and, strange to say, the parents of both are fine specimens of humanity, so that one is at a loss to account for such a strange freak of nature.

Photo. F. Howard Hubbard.

This queer little pair hail from India, and are husband and wife. Their parents are of quite normal stature.

Photo A. W. Outlar.

The shepherds of Hungary find sheepskin overcoats a great comfort, and are almost as fond of them as of their long pipes.

WHO SAYS "SHEEPSKINS"?

Our soldiers are not the only people who have found sheepskin overcoats invaluable during the cold weather. The shepherds of the great Horobágy Plain in the Lowlands of Hungary find them a great protection, and wear them habitually. They are as much a feature of the life of the plain as are the long pipes which are smoked both by men and boys.

Since the war the export of these overcoats has been prohibited by the Government, as all that could be secured were needed by the Hungarian troops to enable them to withstand the rigours of a winter campaign.

In spite of their lonely life the shepherds appear to be as cheerful as they are picturesque, and there is no doubt they appreciate a smoke even more than most people.

Photo Central Press

Signalling can now be accomplished by means of a pair of binoculars over which is mounted a small flashlight. A battery for lighting the lamp is carried in a case attached to the belt.

SIGNALLING BY FLASHLIGHT.

A device for signalling by flashlight, recently designed, consists of a pair of binoculars over which is mounted a small parallel-beam flashlight. This comprises a steel tube (*a*) with a socket-chamber (*b*) to which the lamp is attached; a contact box (*c*) with a push-button (*d*). The flashlight is screwed on the binocular at (*e*). A leather case on the soldier's belt contains the battery for lighting the lamp, and also a duplicate battery.

The flashlight torch is so adjusted that, having sighted a given point, a beam of light can be directed at the desired point by pressing the push-button. A stationary point is selected, and to this spot the moving observers in the field send their signals. If necessary they are kept posted as to the whereabouts of the central station by flashes sent in their direction.

It is claimed that under favourable circumstances signals can be sent for 6 miles, but usually the range is only about half of this distance.

Except in the immediate neighbourhood of this flashlight lamp, only persons in a direct line with it can detect it, unless there are intervening objects in the way.

A Little Trip to Middleburg

By Walter Jones.

This is a frankly American story, chosen deliberately, now that the United States bulk so largely in our thoughts and our newspapers as the chief among neutral nations. It gives a better idea of the typical provincial American small town than dozens of descriptive articles, and is a little gem of its kind. It may serve to introduce British readers to "the American in the street."—Ed. R.M.

"Statuary? Uh-huh. Yes, I do like it, M'rie. Perfectly elegant in a refined home. That's what I told George last fall (autumn) when he hated me buyin' that plaster figure in the book-store window for only two dollars and a half. George was cross three days, but I got to him Friday night with a prune whip. I can always get anything I want out o' George with fried mackerel or a prune whip."

"Same here with apple fritters!" giggled Lura Eissner's caller. "Ain't them cruel husbands just pie for us guileless womin? Positively, Lura, I got to go home. Orrie's quittin' work at five-thirty this week, and I hain't got a thing started for supper."

"Aw, stay just another half-hour, M'rie. I'm only goin' to grab up a snack for George myself. You've only got two petals worked and a rosebud. I think them new stencils're dreadful swell, don't you?"

"Yes, I'm copyin' one of 'em to burn on a pillow-top. Oh say, did I tell you the Upper Ten's havin' a professor down from Middleburg to teach 'em the latest dance steps?"

"I seen it in *The Sentinel*. Some French name the fellah's got."

"Well, why'n't you start something? You're on the social committee. Put it up to 'em to have someone down and learn us, so we can give a—what is it they call 'em—dan-song?—next open night. Listen!"

Both ladies subsided into a momentary silence as a shrill blast tooted through the afternoon quiet of Sycamore Street.

"Gracious Peter!" stampeded Marie. "There's the whistle; them boys'll be over the hill in five minutes, and me ketched without even a teacup on the table! By-bye, dearie. Oh, say, what about to-morrow? You're sure you can go?"

"I certainly can. At first, when I tell him, George'll climb right up on his dignity. But harsh husbands has already been managed by frail womin and will be so again, so don't worry. Really, I've got to take this trip anyway. I'm all ragged out for a day's change, and between ourselves, dearie, I've been makin' out a shopping-list for a month. How did Orrie take it?"

"Ramped around something fierce. Said it wasn't right, him makin' his money in Pembina and me spendin' it in Middleburg. But I told him we simply got to have a rug for the parlour and there ain't no such thing as a real Wilton art square in Pembina. He asked me was I goin' alone? And I turned it aside and says do I look like I need a chaperon? And he says it's a good thing you are, because when two womin get together what extravagance one hasn't got the nerve for the other one has."

"So long, kiddo, till the seven-thirty."

"So long, yourself. We'll sure have one big day to-morrow!"

II.

"George Eissner, I wish you'd wipe your feet once in a while before you come into my clean kitchen!"

George emitted a gurgle from the sink, doused his curly black head under the tap, and gave an exploring sniff.

"What've you got for supper, kid? I'm hungrier'n a actor's boarding-house!"

"Something't you're just crazy about, dear. And I already got it on the table. Come on in before it gets cold."

"Fried!" George lifted the lid of the vegetable dish—and dropped it disgustedly. "Don't you know how to cook anything without it's fried! Married only two years, and already them greasy messes has got me on the road to the hospital."

"Look here, George Eissner, don't you talk to me in that tone of voice! Two-thirds o' the time ain't I went and baked you up everything a gourmong could ask for, till I've burnt most o' my front hair off tendin' the oven door! And if I do broil you something delicate once in a while ain't it only because I been pressed for time or 'm thinking of savin' on the gas bill? Now ca'm down and eat your supper."

"You can't fool me why you fry things! I bet you wait till you see me comin' over the hill and then run and stick something on the stove."

"You're a hard-hearted brute, and I hope some day, when I've slaved myself into the grave, you'll get what you deserve. All afternoon I've been hindered. Right after dinner, when I set down to mend your coat, a man came—then that impident fellah to fix the drain; after four I had a caller; and now to-night I've got to go cookin' again——"

"Cookin' to night? What for?"

"Why, so there'll be something in the house to-morrow, when I'm gone——"

"Where you goin'?"

"Why, didn't I tell you? Up to Middleburg, same as I do every spring. It's a awful tejus trip, and I hate to go, but there's so many things run down about the house, and errands that I simply got to 'tend to, that——"

"Middleburg! No you don't; no such a thing, young lady!"

George's fist descended upon the table with a bang that set the dishes in a clatter.

"I knowed by the way you was jugglin' them coffee-cups that you was up to something you shouldn't. Last spring, when you went up to Middleburg, I was broke for six months! If we can't buy things good enough in Pembina, we can go without."

"Good enough! Why, there's lots of things we can't buy at all in Pembina. Everybody that *is* anybody shops in Middleburg. You know they do, George. O' course, if you wish to live like a man earnin' ten dollars (£2) a week, why, I suppose you can, but you'd ought to have married somebody that ain't got no sense o' what's decent and refined, that's all!"

The young wife's voice sank to a tone of injured submission.

"O' course, I won't go to Middleburg, if you don't want me to. And I suppose your mother can go blind like she's been doin' all winter because them Pembina jewellers don't know how to follow the prescription for her glasses; and them wrong window-shades can set in the attic and rot till it's too late to exchange 'em; and we can buy dining-room chairs like that bedroom suite that's stuck together with glue and tintacks and comes apart the first time you heat the room."

"You know you never had no business, madam, buyin' them shades without measurin' the windows! Why'n't you wait till I get a day off and go up together?"

"You won't have a day till the fourth, and we've already got that picnic planned."

"Well, then—I suppose you'll badger the life out o' me till I leave you—but remember, it's the last time."

He coughed impressively and reached for his pocket-book.

"I guess that's enough to get you through."

His wife gave one look at the bank-note he laid on the table, then arose with dignity.

"George Eissner, put that right back in your pocket, and I hope it burns you. The idea! A foreman that's had a rise twice in

the last year sendin' his wife off to the city with scarcely enough over her tram fare to buy her a starvation lunch!"

George released his thumb from a supplementary roll of greenbacks with the conscious twinkle of a good provider.

"That's it," he growled. "Never happy until you've got your old man broke! Look out you don't spend it for nothing but what's necessary. You—you're goin' alone, ain't you?"

"Alone! What d'you mean? Do I look like I needed a guardian?"

"No, but—never mind. If you wasn't goin' alone, though, I wouldn't let you go at all. When two womin gets their heads together on a shoppin' tour, why——"

"Who do you mean—two womin?"

"You and M'rie. If my wife spent my money and pulled the wool over my eyes like Orrie Harger's I'd——"

"George, you're the best little husband ever!"

Lura cut him off with an affectionate embrace. "I never dreamt you'd give me more'n twenty-five dollars (£5). I'll be just weighed down with the responsibility, and I'll be sure and remember you want me to insist on real leather for the seats in them dining-room chairs. Now I've got to beat it to the kitchen and cook you up some grub."

"Middleburg! No you don't; no such a thing, young lady!" George's fist descended upon the table with a bang that set the dishes in a clatter.

A half-hour later George stuck his head through the pantry door. "Say," he announced boldly, "I got to go down town awhile to meet a fellah in the post office."

"Post office, nothing!" Lura measured a level cupful of sugar, with a severe twinkle of wisdom. "You're headin' for Eddie's to hang around with them billiard-room loafers. Mind you're home by ten o'clock, 'cause I'm liable to be up."

"Ain't I married to a inhuman termagant, though," he grinned back. "Ta-ta, honeybunch."

III.

"Say, M'rie, let's order another one o' them ice-cream sodas. They're lovely and rich, and it nearly cracks the paint off a person's throat, rummagin' around in them hot department stores. Ain't we havin' a perfectly grand day, though?"

In the onyx-topped splendour of Middleburg's most exclusive shop, the two Pembina

recreants sidled up to their drinks like kittens to saucers of cream.

"Lawsy, Lura, ain't it grand, just us girls off on a toot all by our lonesome, without Orrie and George along, naggin' us all the time't we'll eat too many caramels or miss the last train, or corrup' our delicate morals flirtin' with some counter-jumper! Honest, dearie, though Orrie's a dandy boy and I'm fonder of him than I got any right to be, it's my real opinion that there ain't nobody in the world more domineerin' than a male man that's in love with his wife."

"Excepting one that ain't, kiddo!" With a business-like pencil in her mouth, Lura agitated the contents of her warranted-real-seal handbag. "My Scotts, I thought I'd went and lost my shopping-list!"

"It's a quarter-to-eleven, and really it don't hardly seem like we'd bought much of anything."

"Now then, lemme see where I'm at: there's that lingerie edgin' Gertie Young said I couldn't match this side o' New York. Found it in the first store I tried. Gramma's glasses. Didn't that guy have a nerve, tellin' me any optician could ha' filled the prescription! I guess I know what lenses they got in Pembina and what they ain't. Bath-room fixtures. That's a towel-rack and a tumbler-holder, and I'm goin' to get 'em right out of a ten-cent store (6½d. bazaar). George'll never know the difference unless he bites into 'em'. Ain't he the limit, anyway, wantin' genuine nickelled fixtures in a bath-room where they don't show?

"What d'you think about the rug? O' course I presume there is more wear in them mixed patterns, but that grey-blue single shade is a darling! And I could dye my portieres to go with it."

"But it's seven dollars (£1 8s.) more'n I'm givin' for mine, ain't it? Think o' payin——"

"Oh well, I can take most o' that off from the dining-room chairs. That leatherite's really as serviceable as leather. Didn't the furniture man say it's practically indestructible? You can spill your coffee on it every morning in the year, and the kids can scuff over it all day long. I dunno—it does seem sort of motley and faded, but our dining-room's got a northern exposure. The chairs'll come when George's at work anyhow, and I'll keep the curtains down so he'll never know the difference. Who ever cares what dining-room chairs're covered with, when they're sittin' on 'em? I'm *goin' to have* that darling blue rug. That settles it! Three hundred-and-sixty-four days out o' the year I'm under George Eissner's thumb—I guess one day I can be my own boss."

"Ain't you the limit for cheek!"

"Listen, dearie; you got to help me out. What'll I tell George about them window-shades? Did you hear that impident clerk say he knows they're already bought a year 'cause they've quit keepin' that make, and anyway, madam, where's your bill? I got to admit, M'rie, they're faded a little where the sun got to 'em through the attic curtains, but I think it's the meanest ever when people won't give you satisfaction for goods that're no use to you! Already this morning I've left 'em in two stores, and them cash-girls comes runnin' after me, bellerin' 'Madam, here's your package!' I dar's'n't cart 'em back home or George'll get mad first and then talk the life out o' me. Shut up your hysterics, M'rie. I don't see nothing amusin' about it."

"Honest, it's the funniest sight I ever seen, those cash-girls hikin' after you with them window-shades! Why'n't you leave 'em in a rest-room somewhere, or—wait, I got it; keep 'em till we get on the train, and drop 'em out the window into the river."

"Just it! You're a life-saver, M'rie! I'll drop 'em in the river, and tell George they got lost in the deliv'ry. My land, look what time it is! And we got to finish up by two o'clock, so we can get in a *matinée*."

"What'll we go to? That stock company or a movie?"

"Movie! Don't we get enough o' them at home? We're going to that stock show with orchestra seats and a pound o' the best chocolates in Middleburg."

"But, Lura, the posters look like——. D'you think Orrie and George'd want——"

"No, George and Orrie wouldn't want! But what George and Orrie don't know won't hurt 'em. Besides, what's the use o' goin' on a jaunt if you don't do something 'venturous? But if you'd really rather——"

"I'm just crazy to, if you think it's all right!" Marie began gathering up her bundles delightedly. "We'll go over and get the tickets right away."

IV.

"Hullo, George, dear. You here ahead o' me? I'm 'most tired to death luggin' these heavy bundles up from the station. I didn't know but mebbe you'd meet me. Honest, I was that tired out to get home, I could ha' howled on the train! I don't believe I'll go up to Middleburg next spring.

"I'm just crazy to, if you think it's all right!" Marie began gathering up her bundles delightedly. "We'll go over and get the tickets right away."

It's too tejus a trip. Everything went nice at the shop to-day?"

With this ingratiating query, Lura deposited in the hall five bundles, a suit-case, her hand-bag, and a string-bag.

Empty wash-basin in hand, her lord and master glowered from the open doorway.

"Everything's went all right at the *shop*. I thought you said you'd be home, madam, in time to open up the house and get me some supper!"

"How could I get here before the train? It was only seven minutes late, and——"

"Excuses, like you always make. You hadn't any business to go; you know you hadn't. And if you didn't mean to get back you should ha' told your mother to come down and cook me some vittles. It's a darned poor show the head o' the place gets in this house. Here there ain't no hot water to wash, and the neighbours come in and tell me the man was here with the coal and took

it away again, and at six o'clock my lady wife shows up dressed like an actress or——"

"George Eissner, one more word o' such language and I'll pack up and clear out! Makin' shameful talk like that, when I been draggin' myself around all day, gettin' together stuff to put in your home and make it comfortable. How long've you been in this house anyway? I'll bet not five minutes, 'cause I seen two o' your hands goin' over the hill on my way from the station."

"Aw, quit your jawin'. Everybody on Sycamore Street 'll hear you."

"Well, let 'em!"

Lura turned upon her angry spouse a calmly belligerent countenance.

"I'd just as soon let the whole neighbourhood hear what a grumblin' husband I've got."

"For heaven's sake, soft pedal it, kid!"

George tacked diplomatically into the wind.

"Aw now, you know I didn't mean nothing, only it *is* kind o' rough comin' home tired and dirty after a hard day's work and findin' my own door closed against me."

"You're in a desperate case, ain't you? How often 've you came home from work 't you ain't found a pipin' hot supper waitin' on the table? Just tell me! As for your bein' tired, I'll bet you wasn't so tired you couldn't stop on the way for half-an-hour! And if you think that's what I am, a chorus girl, you better get a divorce and marry someone that'll stay at home and cater for you like you want!"

George ran for cover like an armoured cruiser with a Dreadnought off her bows. "Darn it, kid, you know I didn't *mean* anything what I said! I was just kiddin'. And it's no difference about me eatin' a cold supper. Hot food ain't alwus good for a fellah at night, anyway. I'll just bring in them bundles for you, and help you set the table, and——"

"You drop them things, George, and go and wash yourself!"

Lura applied a match to the range and pushed the tea-kettle forward. Her husband's tousled head popped slyly over her shoulder.

"No, I won't make up and I won't kiss you. 'Cause, if you didn't mean what you said, there ain't nothing to make up. And if you did, I'm too mad to kiss you. You clear out now and don't show up again in this kitchen till I ring the supper-bell."

In the wake of this ultimatum, Lura scurried up the back stairs to get into her work-dress. As she paused before her mirror to gather up a strand of refractory hair, the face that confronted her was not that of an outraged, down-trodden wife, but her own usual, cheerfully smiling visage. "He's up on his dignity all right!" she confided complacently to the image in the mirror. "But nothing like I thought he'd be!"

Ten minutes later she tinkled the supper-bell. George came in still peevish, but propitiatory.

"Already! Are you sure you've gave your coffee time to boil up? 'Cause I think it's chilly without any fire in here all day, don't you? Why've you got all them bundles litterin' the table?"

"Oh, I just thought it'd be fun openin' 'em while we're eatin'."

"Hm, it looks like you'd bought out the whole o' Middleburg. You might ha' gave me one more meal in peace before we go on the rates. Ouch!"

He was investigating apathetically a covered tureen.

"Why, the thing's hot!"

A cloud of steam, accompanied by a savoury odour, ascended to his nostrils.

"What's this? Who sent it in?"

"Sent it in? Nobody. It's fricasseed chicken with rice, that I sat up half o' last night boilin'—and made with my fireless cooker, the same which you said was only fit to use for a dustbin."

George's mouth slowly relaxed into a grin.

"Well, how should I know it'd keep your grub hot all day!"

He cast experimental eyes at a flanking pudding-dish.

"What's in there?"

"Nothing, George, but a plain Indian pudding. I'm sorry, dearie, that, being away all afternoon, I couldn't fix something more temptin' for your supper. But I've ordered some mackerel; it'll be down on the morning train, and to-morrow night you can have some fried."

Lura kept her eyes demurely on the table-cloth. She drew the nearest bundle towards her, and began untying its string.

"Look, George, these bathroom fixtures—ain't they great?—with a glass rod, so it won't get fly-speckled. Look, George!"

"Uh-huh."

"And this"—undoing a small tissue-wrapped parcel—"is two new saucers to go with the best set, like them that got broke. You wanted me to get them, didn't you, George?"

"Huh-uh—uh-huh—I dunno- did I?"

"Why, George, you *said* you did!"

"Why, sure, I did then. There ain't nothing the matter with this chicken. It tastes more-ish. What's in that one with the green string?"

'Calico, for my kitchen dress. The ginghams they had was perfectly sweet, but I thought calico was suitabler for a working-man's wife."

"Well, so it is. I'm glad you didn't buy nothing foolish, like you would if M'rie 'd been with you. Where's them window-shades? Would they change 'em?"

"Would they? When they hadn't never been used? I'd like to see 'em refuse! You didn't expect I'd *lug* 'em back, did you? I've got a *couple* o' things comin' by parcels-post."

"That rug you been pesterin' me about for the last six months, I s'pose? Some more carriage I got to pay. What colour'd you get it?"

"Blue, George, a perfectly lovely shade, that——"

"Blue! That's a rotten colour for a rug, especially if it's light. It'll show all the mud and——"

"But this ain't light, George. And it ain't dark. It's just—right. And awfully elegant and rich. Here, George, you mustn't open that one! Keep your hands off of it."

"But it smells funny—kind o' like——"

"George, you mustn't. Anyway, not till——"

"Why mustn't I? Am I such a fool I'll break it? You come over here and sit on my knee and we'll both open it."

Lura accepted this solution with alacrity. When numerous wrappings had been removed, a full-sized cigar-box lay revealed.

"For you, George."

As he unwound the red ribbon that bound it, George groaned.

"Anything but them! Girlie, whyn't, you stick to slippers or neckties, or something that a chap could use? I bet these here are oakum, or some rank stuff that——"

"Ain't they right—Jockey Boy—just like you always buy in at Eddie's?"

"Gorry, they are, at that! But you'd oughtn't to have bought 'em out of—I mean a box is a whole lot."

"They didn't come out of *your* old money. I bought 'em with what I made crochetin' them lace shawls for Mrs. Simons."

"Honest?"

"Honest."

The late martinet was reduced to a pulp of contrition.

Without waiting for further confirmation, he gathered the fair lady to his manly bosom and bestowed a round dozen of copyright endearments where he considered they would do the most good. In the midst of this interlude, the telephone bell jangled.

"Let me down, George. Who can it be this time o' night? . . . Hullo. . . . Yes, this is Mrs. Eissner. . . . Why, yes, I was, but—who are you anyway? . . . Oh, yes, a reporter for *The Sentinel*. . . . . Mrs. who—oh, Harger. Certainly we were together—that is, I—I just happened to meet her in Middleburg. I don't think you'd better put it in. . . . No, not *anything*. . . . I'd rather you didn't. . . . Well, if it'll help your column out. And you might say we were visiting friends, . . . No, not at all. . . . Good-bye.

"What d'you think, George? It was a reporter from *The Sentinel*, and he's goin' to put us in the paper! I presume they're down on the platform when the train comes in. Don't it make a person feel swell? And wasn't it clever o' me, thinkin' on my feet to put it 'visitin' friends?' Nobody'll ever imagine we was shoppin'."

"But you was, though. Ain't you got any conscience? People that lives in Pembina ought to patronise their home industries first," reproved George sententiously.

"Quit talkin' that board-of-trade slogan stuff to me! Ain't you a home industry?"

But George was not thus to be beguiled. "Look here, Miss Minx"—he fixed her with an impaling eye, "you been foolin' me all along! That's an awful suspicious coincidence about you and M'rie meetin' in the street in Middleburg."

"Well, I can't help it if she goes up the same day I do, can I?"

"That isn't what I'm askin' you. I'm askin' you, did you know it?"

"Oh, I thought—mebbe she might, but—listen! There's the 'phone again. No, it's the door-bell."

Before she could answer, the door opened, and Orrie and Marie tumbled into the dining-room. Both were breathless. Orrie led Marie, squealing with laughter, by a stern hand.

"Eissner," he cried, "what d'you think about these girls! Been off all day on a jaunt——"

"Why, Orrie Harger!"

"And the poor, unsuspectin' creatures that is their husbands never knowed nothing about it!"

"Ain't it the limit!" boomed George, winking behind his hand. "Set down, you folks."

"They're regular suffragettes, tryin' to break up our happy hearthstones! What'd we ought to do, George, to get even?"

George chuckled broadly.

"I think, Orrie, 't we'd ought to turn the tables on 'em to-morrow night!"

"George Eissner, if you ever put a drunken foot in this house——!"

"Set down, and be sociable."

"This kid of mine, George, she said she had to go, because she couldn't get a decent range nor no dishes to match her company set in Pembina. And afore she's in the house to-night a hour, one o' them society reporters calls her up on the 'phone, and she opens her mouth and puts her foot right in it."

"Same here. Ain't they scandalous! Proves what I always said, Orrie: womin 're the biggest liars ever."

"Orrie, have one of George's cigars"—Lura came to the rescue of this ribald masculine persiflage. "He ain't got the manners to offer you one, when he's just bought him a new box."

"Why, Lura, you fibber! I was with you in the store when——"

"There, I told you they was around together all day. And what do you think, Eissner, after runnin' through every cent I gave her, she tries to buy me off with a new bath-robe! Say, it's some bath-robe though! You'd ought to come over and see it."

"Yes, come on over," chimed in Marie.

"Not now," Lura vetoed. "You folks stay over here, and we'll have a little game o' cards. George, open that square box with the gold cord on it; it's a pound o' chocolates. We'll just have a little al fresco party. Come on, M'rie; while the boys 're gettin' the cards ready and the table, we'll go out in the kitchen and look at my new broiler."

The moment the kitchen door closed upon them the two ladies fell rapturously into each other's arms.

"Honest, M'rie, when you first come in I was scared for a minute 't mebbe Orrie was really sore. How'd he take it? Did he run high on you?"

"Did he? Called me a inhumin womin that wasn't fit to keep his home, and flammed around something fierce until I brought him a floating island and some potato salad out o' the ice-box. Inside o' half-an-hour I had him feedin' out o' my hand. He thinks that purple in his bath-robe goes dandy with his dark hair."

"Them big brutes 're easier 'n pie for us poor weak womin, ain't they, M'rie? Honest, ain't they? It's been a perfect day!"

Back in the dining-room Orrie was setting up a baize-topped card-table, while George rummaged out a pack of cards. When the job was complete they bit the ends off their cigars and confronted each other with mutual grins.

"Them girls 're some team, ain't they, George?"

"They sure are. Alwus together, like a couple o' sisters."

"People jollied us we was a long time pickin', but I guess we picked us winners, George."

"Right-o! It ain't many men that're as lucky as we. They're a pair o' thoroughbreds, them two! But I'll tell you what, Harger"—he sank his voice to a stage whisper—"if they wasn't hitched to fellahs that kep' a firm hand on 'em, they'd run away with the works; I'll bet they would. Whenever Lura climbs on her high horse I just pull the wool over her eyes that I'm a hard chap—till she's good and scared. Though, o' course, I don't mean none of it."

He reached lazily for the chocolates.

"Hullo, there's another bundle over there that ain't been opened."

A discovering finger failed to identify the contents. Orrie snapped the cord. A bewildering array of lace and flannel, linen and ribbon, tumbled out upon the table. The explorers pawed it over gingerly.

"I guess," chuckled Orrie, "that stuff's what women call their lingerie."

But a sudden light of understanding leapt into George's eyes.

"I'll bet I know!" he cried, jumping to his feet. "I'll bet I know what it is! By Gad! And she never told me."

Orrie bent over for a closer examination.

"I guess that's what," he agreed with awe.

George took a couple of silent puffs.

"Gee, it makes a guy feel kind o' solemn. Just a few minutes ago we was all of us in here kiddin', and now—a womin goes through a lot for us rough men, don't she, Harger? And I—why, just to-night I was talkin' to the little girl like I hadn't ought to of."

He folded up the package tenderly.

"I'll let her tell me. I guess she'd rather."

Orrie waited a decorous interval, then gave him a resounding slap on the back.

"Put her there, old sox!"

As their fists gripped, he reached over with his free hand and helped himself to another Jockey Boy.

"It's your treat, Eissner!" he chuckled.

ANOTHER THRILLING SPY STORY!

The MINE

By Louis Tracy.

When Mr. Charles F. Furneaux, of the Criminal Investigation Department, gets on the track of a German spy there is little chance of his escaping. The following story gives an account of an exciting capture on the part of the astute detective and his colleagues.

During many days—nearly a whole month, in fact—the supply of German spies along the north-east coast, especially in Yorkshire, was not equal to the enemy's demand. At one time the Home Office, which blandly discredited the existence of active German agents on that vulnerable flank of Britain, contemplated the recall of Mr. Charles F. Furneaux, the Scotland Yard expert detailed to assist Mr. Robert Faber, one-time private secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Yorkshire, Sir Digby Grant, but now a secret service agent for the county.

One evening the two were about to dine in the chief inn of a small town, near which certain suspicious lights had been observed, when a smart lance-corporal of Territorials entered the room and saluted.

"Which of you gentlemen is Mr. Furneaux?" he inquired.

"I," said the little man instantly.

The lance-corporal was not aware, of course, of the famous detective's professional status, or he, like every stranger, would have exhibited some degree of surprise, because Furneaux, in face and appearance, suggested a diminutive comedian rather than a terror to evil-doers.

"You're wanted on the telephone at the Coastguard Station—London call, sir," he announced.

Furneaux glanced at his watch. It was half-past six.

"Come with me," he said to Faber. "Some blighter in town imagines that people in the country observe London hours for meals. Perhaps you'd like to hear me telling him his real name. As we go out we can petition the landlady to keep the joint near the oven for ten minutes."

When the detective heard the voice at the London end of the wire, however, his deferential "Yes, sir," was hardly in accord either with his avowed intent or the astonished wink with which he favoured Faber.

"Is it really necessary to remain so long in the north?" drawled the voice. "A lot of work is accumulating here, and the Home Office people inform me that the spy mania is largely a disease of old women of both sexes."

"That is for you to decide, sir," said Furneaux suavely.

"Then you had better return."

"Has the Home Office kept you in touch with recent events, sir?"

"No—er—that is, they convey a general impression that the local police can do everything really needed."

"I should hate to doubt the ability of the local police, but, thus far, they have only locked up a few waiters and hairdressers, whereas Mr. Faber and I have captured eight genuine spies, one of whom is dead and another seriously wounded. The rest are in prison."

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"Good gracious!" cried the voice. "I haven't heard a word of this."

"The facts are not known to the Press, and Whitehall doesn't appear to appreciate them, but you'll find the whole story in the Yard's records, sir."

Evidently there was a pause of doubt in London. Then came the words:

"Somebody in Whitehall is playing the fool. Stop where you are. Good-night!"

Furneaux replied politely, though well aware that an irate and perplexed official had banged a telephone-receiver into its clutch.

"Thus are we governed!" he grinned. "One side of Whitehall doesn't know what the other side is doing. Yet *we* are winning the war. If that is so, what a holy mix-up there must be in Potsdam!"

Nevertheless, while dining, he confided to Faber that they must produce a veritable spy during the next couple of days or Othello might lose his occupation. Luckily, they had not to wait so long. Faber had just lighted a cigar—Furneaux abhorred the nicotine habit, which, he held with Tolstoi, destroyed the finer nerves—when Police-Constable Baker came in. Baker, an ordinary village policeman in peace time, was now the trusted assistant of the secret service agents, and had almost forgotten what a uniform felt like.

He handed a note to Faber.

"The Chief Constable has sent this, sir," he said. "Colonel Fox didn't quite know where you gentlemen were staying to-night, so he ordered a constable to find me, and my letter contained yours."

"Thanks," said Faber. "Help yourself to a whisky-and-soda and a cigar."

Then he opened the note, read it, and tossed it to Furneaux with the comment:

"Marching orders."

The script ran:

During the past three nights a bright light, evidently a signal, has been seen high above the cliff at Sealby. The local police and Territorial sentries have watched it and searched for the operator, or operators, but without success. Would you care to take the matter up?

"Would a duck swim?" chortled Furneaux. "Where is Sealby?" and he turned so sharply on Baker that the latter choked over a mouthful of a mixture which he regarded as even more grateful and comforting than a certain famous brand of cocoa.

The place happened to be less than twelve miles distant. A Rolls-Royce car which Sir Digby Grant had lent to his ex-secretary brought the three thither before nine o'clock. The village of Sealby is tucked snugly into a dell below the southerly flank of the giant cliff which figures on the chart as Sealby Nab, and the road from the interior strikes seaward across a bleak moor until it descends in a series of curves to the cluster of houses perched just above high-water mark on a rocky beach.

That night in mid-September happened to be fine but cloudy. The air was clear. There was little wind. The lights of passing vessels shone like moving stars in the black expanse of the North Sea. In effect, the weather offered the best possible conditions for coast signalling.

The car was speeding along the last plateau of the moor before the road dived into a wooded ravine, and Faber was about to switch on the lamps (on unfrequented highways they travelled without headlights and as noiselessly as possible) when he and Furneaux simultaneously caught sight of a bright light which flared into sudden view.

Faber shut off the engine and jammed on the foot-brake. Furneaux half turned his head.

"You know this place, Baker?" he said.

"As well as any, sir. I was stationed here two years."

"Is that the line of Sealby Nab?"

Obviously he meant the black, undulating mass which showed clearly in front and to the eastward.

"Yes, sir," came the quick answer. "On the other side there's a straight drop of four hundred feet to the sea."

"And how does one get to the top of the cliff?"

"From the village a path leads to a spinney about half-way up. After that, in broad daylight, it's a half-mile of rough climbin' through thick heather an' over stones an' bits of bog. A sort of road leads to the same spinney from Mr. Holmes' house in the dip just beneath us."

"Who is Mr. Holmes?"

"Manager of the Sealby mine, sir—iron-stone, but the sea face workings are not used now."

"There *is* a mine in operation, though?"

"Yes, sir. The galleries extend hundreds of yards all ways inland, an' the stone is run through a tunnel to a little harbour some two miles to the right of Sealby."

"I put the question just to make sure. That light up there can be seen clearly from the sea?"

"That it can, sir. For twenty miles, or more, if it carries so far."

Furneaux relapsed into silence. By this time Faber was so well acquainted with his colleague's peculiar ways that he did not even think of suggesting a forward movement. Sometimes the little detective would act with disconcerting and abrupt decision; at others, he would sit still while a drama was apparently at its very height.

To-night he elected to remain in the car and watch developments. Faber, however, agreed with this passive attitude. He realised that it was far too late to think of capturing the signaller that night. Between their present view-point and the probable locality of the light intervened a mile-and-a-half of impassable moorland. Nevertheless, it was irritating to be forced to watch some impudent alien, or, what was worse, some renegade Briton, flaunting that signal in an English sky, and an impatient exclamation burst involuntarily from his lips.

"Yes, it hurts," squeaked Furneaux. "It hurts like—well, let's be philosophic! Meant to simulate Sirius, eh? As the lamp revolves slowly it shines through a globe slightly tinted in strips of blue, green, heliotrope, and white. Pretty effect, too. Only artistic thing the Germans have devised during the war. They draw the greater part of their inspiration from a butcher's shop."

"At a distance it might actually be mistaken for a star," agreed Faber.

"They count on that, the artful devils! Only it happens that Sirius rises to-night in the south-east and at midnight. If the Great Dog were to appear in the north-east at a quarter-to-nine, and beneath heavy clouds, the Kaiser would soon take a back seat as a disturber of worlds."

Faber was minded to ask how Scotland Yard contrived to assimilate such out-of-the-way knowledge, but a dramatic interruption prevented further speech. Three spurts of vivid red flame stabbed the blackness of the moor; some four seconds later, three gunshots reached their ears.

"Now the battle is commencing!" chortled Furneaux. "Territorials and police in the firing line, blazing away at they know not what. I do hope they won't hit one another."

The light still gleamed in insolent challenge. Three more shots were fired. The stalkers were evidently converging on a given point. And yet the light shone undisturbed, as if it were really a star. The shooters might have been so many dogs baying at the moon. After a third irregular volley, it disappeared, but not because the apparatus was hit. The light went out after the sounds of the firing became audible. As a matter of fact, this man-made Sirius rose again that night at 10.30, and remained in the sky until eleven o'clock. It was seen by the returned party of scouts, in whose company, by that time, the motorists found themselves.

"Well, if that isn't a fair licker!" growled a sergeant of Territorials, who had organised the night's search of the moor. "It's black magic, that's what it is. I'm prepared to swear that no man could have flown a kite or balloon on the top of Sealby Nab to-night without being caught. It simply couldn't be done."

"But you fired at the light only?" put in Furneaux.

"There was nothing else to fire at. We beat the heather thoroughly. Look at us!"

Certainly, the sergeant and his companions, another Territorial and a policeman, bore every sign of rough work.

"Were you round about Johnson's Folly?" inquired P.C. Baker.

"Yes. I even looked inside, while the other fellows held my heels."

"What is Johnson's Folly?" demanded Furneaux.

Baker answered.

"A man named Johnson opened up the mines hereabouts, sir. He began by sinkin' a twenty-foot shaft from the top of the cliff, an' it broke him. Then another man took over the mine, an' made the tunnel I spoke of, an' he's coining money."

"Does the shaft lead into the old workings?"

"I suppose it does, sir." The policeman paused. Then he added breathlessly: "By gum, that's queer!"

Evidently a kindred and novel thought had struck the others. They gathered around the detective, and awaited his next words with obvious interest.

Furneaux, big little man that he was, never sought the admiration of the multitude.

"How can we get into those workings?" he cried sharply.

"One of the galleries leads out almost on to the beach, but it'll be dangerous work going far in."

"That's what we're here for. We have plenty of electric torches. Who's coming with me? If we go quietly, and don't touch the props, we need not necessarily bring about a fall of earth or rock. Perhaps the place is choked already."

The local policeman laughed.

"It's all right for a couple of hundred yards," he explained. "One day last week some village boys went in and were half-scared to death. They said they saw a ghost!"

'Horrible!" cackled Furneaux. "But the right time to see a ghost is at midnight, when churchyards yawn and graves give up their dead. Lead on, Baker! If the gods are just as they are wise you'll retire from the force a fat superintendent."

None but he who has experienced the eerie desolation of an abandoned mine can form an adequate mental picture of the difficulties which faced the explorers from the moment they set foot in the Sealby Nab workings. A mine gallery is not neatly bricked and arched like a railway tunnel. It is a mere hole, bored to the smallest dimensions for a specific purpose, and only retained in a passable condition while that purpose is being served.

Let a single week lapse without adequate supervision, and the narrow, low passage becomes a dangerous ruin. If that be so, the perils of transit through a gallery which had not been used for many years can be vaguely imagined. The one doubtful safeguard lay in the fact that every conceivable fall of rock and earth had apparently taken place already, though each man in the party of six was well aware that the final crumbling of some rotten prop might bring away another section of roof either as they passed or afterwards.

Still, they contrived to penetrate to a distance which might be roughly estimated at two hundred yards, when Baker, who was leading, uttered a gurgling cry.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed, "what's that?"

The electric torches carried by the whole six threw a bright glare ahead. Some few feet in front a rock-fall blocked fully one-half of the narrow passage. Beyond was gloom, and in that gloom shimmered an unearthly object, a dimly visible but unmistakable skeleton, whose white bones emitted a phosphorescent radiance.

"Br-r-r-r!" shivered Furneaux. "We've done enough for honour to-night. Let's go back!"

"Oh, rot!" cried the Territorial sergeant savagely. "I'm not going to be stopped by a skull and cross-bones."

"Is this my business, or yours?" and the detective's nerves seemed to recover their normal tension very rapidly.

"Well, in a sense, it's yours," was the grudging answer.

"Then, about turn—quick march!"

Faber did not interfere. Furneaux's methods were unorthodox, but they invariably had a motive.

The local policeman was a candid person. When he sniffed the fresh sea air again, and gazed out across the dark plain of the ocean, he said thankfully:

"If I thought I had to take that trip many more times I'd find another job!"

There was a general laugh. Truth to tell, they were each and all glad to be out of that chaotic inferno, with its fearsome bogey.

Furneaux gathered the party for a short conclave in a room of the Sealby inn, which had housed the car. He asked Baker and the local men to engage a few volunteers for service next evening. On no account was a word to be uttered as to their brief adventure in the mine. As village gossip must be sated, however, it would be well to admit the failure of the attempt to capture the signallers that night, while promising developments within a few days. In the meantime some local assistants would be trained as scouts.

When those same assistants assembled at the mine manager's house, a mile inland, at dusk the following evening, they were vastly surprised at finding what "scouting" consisted in. They were told to shoulder a heavy railway sleeper, a plank some eight feet in length by one foot in width, and four inches thick.

There were six of these sleepers, and three men were allotted to each, two to carry and one to relieve. They moved off without delay. An hour later they reached the mouth of the Johnson's Folly shaft, each trio separate from its neighbours, and forbidden to talk, smoke, or make the slightest sound.

The shaft itself had a diameter of fully twenty feet. Its brick edges had fallen in, and a rim of ten feet or more had been stoutly fenced, to prevent accidents to tourists or shooting parties. Within this broken border the heather and sedge grass had grown even more luxuriantly than on the rest of the moor. Even in climbing the rails to allow the sergeant of Territorials to lie down and peer into the depths, the previous night's search party had incurred a good deal of risk. According to the mine-manager's plans, the shaft was 300 feet deep, and the seaward gallery beneath fell another hundred feet in a length of one mile.

The sky was again clouded, so the night

Within ten minutes three Germans were roasted into daylight. Two of them were of the stout, heavy Teutonic type . . . The third, a small, wizened man, bearded and spectacled, seemed to pick out Furneaux as though by instinct. [*Page 61, col. 2.*]

was pitch dark. Every man's ears were intent on the slightest sound, but beyond the unavoidable rustle of the heather when someone moved, or the scurry of a rabbit through the undergrowth, there was no indication of anything unusual happening until the changing light flared into view high above their heads.

A gasp of amazement was choked by Furneaux's quick command:

"Number One Section!"

Three detachments rose to their feet, each handling a plank. "With a "One, two, three!" they heaved the heavy blocks of wood right into the mouth of the pit.

"Number Two Section!" screamed the detective, and three more sleepers followed the first consignment

The light vanished as they heard the premonitory rumble of falling rubbish caused by the impact of such solid bodies against the crumbling walls. The noise swelled into a long-drawn-out boom as the volume of *débris* increased. The surrounding air became opaque with dust, and long after the main fall had exhausted itself, other fragments would thunder down the abyss, and send back reverberating echoes.

At last an electric torch gleamed on the moor.

"This way, gentlemen," cried Furneaux with elation. "There will be no more signalling to-night, or for many nights to come, from the top of Sealby Nab. Now, I fancy, you can all do with a drink to clear away the dust."

He and Faber produced Thermos flasks, and although some of the scouts expected something alcoholic, they were by no means unwilling for a mouthful of hot tea.

Many and various were the questions put by the eager crowd, but Furneaux professed blank ignorance.

"Come early in the morning," he said, "and help us to find a balloon, which may have burst and dropped on the moor. Then we'll all know just where we are. At present everything is mere guesswork."

He and Faber, the policeman, and the Territorial sergeant said nothing as to the sentries which would guard each of four exits from the old workings all night. It was not that they expected anyone to escape by such means. The mine manager, an expert, assured them that the air concussion at the foot of the shaft would cause heavy falls over hundreds of feet in all neighbouring galleries.

A selected few were at the pit mouth soon after dawn. They carried ropes and a breeches buoy, such as is used by the life-saving rocket apparatus. A fisherman, who volunteered for a service which looked risky but was not so, got into the buoy, and was lowered a few feet down the centre of the shaft.

"Below there!" the others heard him shout.

They fancied that a faint hail came in reply, but the fisherman's next words put the matter beyond doubt.

"How many of you?" he yelled.

And again, after a pause:

"How far down, an' on which side? North, south, east, or west?"

"Right-o!" he sang out, evidently satisfied with the information obtained. "We'll drop a carrier. Let each man make fast inside, one at a time. Give one pull on the thin rope to show you've got the buoy, an' two as a signal to begin hoistin'. . . . Heave away, mates!"

He came up, his weather-beaten face aglow with excitement.

"Three of 'em down there, an' sayin' their prayers, I'll bet you, judgin' by the way they yelped at me. Lor' love a duck, they must ha' took me for an angel!"

Within ten minutes three Germans were hoisted into daylight. Two of them were of the stolid, heavy Teutonic type. They cared little what became of them once their lives were spared. Indeed, they looked like men who were profoundly relieved because an ordeal had ended.

The third, a small, wizened man, bearded and spectacled, seemed to pick out Furneaux as though by instinct.

"I'll answer your questions if you'll answer mine," he said, speaking excellent English.

"It's a bargain. Who begins?"

"I. Has there been a successful landing?"

"Where?"

"In England, of course."

"No. The only landing that has taken place is by British troops in France."

The German's face, though darkened by dirt and perspiration, showed disappointment and doubt.

"Is that true?" he snapped.

"Of course, it's true. I don't purpose answering your questions by lies, nor will I look for lies from you when it comes to my turn."

"Is the German Army in Paris?"

"No; nor ever likely to be. The first

rush carried the French and British to the Marne, but the Allies are now forcing your troops back the way they came."

"What of Russia?"

"Millions of her men are swarming on the eastern frontier. Her forced march into East Prussia helped the operations in the West."

The German turned to his compatriots and said something, but they only shrugged. Let empires totter as they might, this brace of warriors was glad to be in the daylight again.

Faber and Furneaux understood, of course, that the third man, who spoke like what he was, a University professor, had told his assistants that their long vigil in the mine had proved abortive.

"Well?" he said sadly, facing Furneaux again.

"A balloon, I take it?" said the detective.

"Yes."

"It rose about 500 feet, and the lamp was suspended half-way?"

"Yes."

"You and these louts have lived in the mine since war broke out?"

"Yes."

"You personally had visited the place often in earlier years, and had even stored away many of the heavy materials needed for making gas and electricity?"

"Yes. You reduce to a minimum the process of extracting information."

Furneaux giggled at the compliment.

"That's the great mistake you Germans have made, Herr Professor," he said. "You believed that no brains could exist outside Charlottenburg. You can enlighten me on one point, however. On what day did you come to England?"

The other took thought.

"I have lost count of time," he said at last. "What day of the month is this?"

Furneaux beckoned to Baker.

"Take him away," he said. "Let him have a wash, and a meal if he needs it."

The other two prisoners made no secret of the date. They crossed to Harwich on July 29th, three days before anyone outside official circles in England even suspected the possibility of war. They were skilled miners, and had adjusted the ladders which climbed the shaft to the point where the professor wanted a room excavated and staging erected for his plant. The work occupied six weary weeks.

The first of the falling planks had dislodged many, if not all, of the ladders, while the second series had caused such ruin that escape seemed to be absolutely hopeless. They, as miners, knew that the bottom of the shaft was closed, and that fallen ladders and storehouse were buried, but, as a last project of despair, they meant lowering one man by the strong steel wire they still possessed, in the hope that he might find a few serviceable ladders, by which means they could ultimately reach the surface.

That evening, on the terrace at Armathwaite, Faber thrilled Evelyn Grant, Sir Digby's daughter, with the story of the mine, which Furneaux, with rare kind-heartedness, was spinning out to the Lord-Lieutenant in the library.

"Bobbie," said the girl, when the recital had ended, "I love to hear you telling these things, because every spy you capture means such a lessening of England's danger, but I can't help wondering, when you are away, what awful peril you may be in. What about that horrid skeleton, for instance?"

Faber laughed.

"Oh, Furneaux didn't even trouble to ask the foxy Professor to explain it. A very palpable trick—an outline drawn on a rock with luminous paint. Possibly it was meant as a warning, too. Anyone who passed that point might have sprung a small charge of dynamite and caused a heavy subsidence. But Furneaux guessed instantly there was a human agency at work in the mine, and that was all he really wanted to know."

"Does Mr. Furneaux take the lead in everything, then?" pouted Evelyn. Like every woman, she wanted her own man to occupy the front rank.

"We don't quarrel about that," said Faber modestly. "I do a bit of thinking occasionally, and we manage to agree. For instance, the use of railway sleepers was my idea. Furneaux wanted to contrive a bomb—a rather difficult thing to do in an out-of-the-way place like Scalby."

"Good gracious!" she cried. "What a bloodthirsty little man he must be! But how did he know about Sirius?"

"He tells me that every good detective ought to read the astronomical page in Whitaker's Almanack each day. Then he makes no mistake as to the hours of sunlight and the phases of the moon. Come out to the terrace. There is no moon to-night!"

(Next month Mr. Charles F. Furneaux emerges triumphant from another exciting adventure, the account of which you will find of absorbing interest.)

OUT OF SORTS

Dalsyings with the Doctor Illustrated by Leading Humorous Artists.

By Lesbia Robinson.

Mr. Bert Thomas depicts the despair of the Harley Street physician who learns that his most profitable lady patient has suddenly been cured by a patent medicine.

In whatever spirit you visit the doctor you are almost sure to be disappointed. If you buoy yourself up with the belief that you are only a bit run down, he is sure to accuse you of some high-sounding disease and condemn you to slops and inactivity: while should you have schooled yourself to face a verdict of acute appendicitis, he will prosaically label your complaint nothing but indigestion.

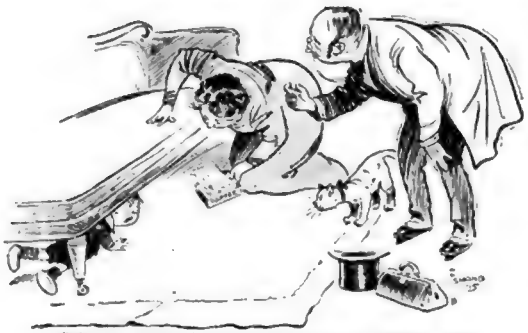
Of course, there are chronic invalids who wallow in ill-health, exhibit rows of empty medicine bottles, and talk "symptoms" to the exclusion of all else. These are only one degree more unbearable than the misguided folks who refuse to be ill in a decent bed-clothes-and-barley-water fashion, but continue to go about their appointed tasks in a spirit of peevish self-martyrdom.

Doctors are essentially a privileged race, for they have their patients continually at a disadvantage. It is impossible to be dignified while you stand in unattractive *negligée* before a potentate who pounds your ribs, inspects your tongue, and plays a lively tattoo on your chest. Escape is prohibited owing to exigencies of attire; once in the consulting-room you must stay there until the verdict pronounced, you go forth to face a diet of bread-and-milk and soda-water, club-swinging before breakfast, or whatever form of agony is prescribed.

"A Complicated Case"—the feelings of the nervous man who imagines himself a prey to every possible disease, touchingly portrayed by Mr. Thomas Henry.

There are people who, having sought a doctor's advice, discard it if it is not to their taste, as airily as they would an unattractive tie or pair of socks. Bidden to feed scantily on toast and rice pudding, they hew their way through acres of beefsteak; medicine they either ignore or gulp unmeasured from the bottle, while any advice as to exercise and fresh air is treated as a subject for ridicule and banter.

But if a medical examination in a doctor's consulting-room is trying, it is far less so than the ordeal to which our would-be recruits are subject ere they can number themselves among the chosen people. The



"Bribery and Corruption"—the trials of the family doctor called in to attend a spoilt child, strikingly illustrated by Esmond.

course of skipping-rope exercises by a man whom five minutes ago you had never seen.

The greatest trial of the fashionable physician's life is probably the society lady, who insists on his endowing her with some aristocratic complaint, and desires a course of treatment at once pleasant and picturesque. The rest cure is usually popular with this type of patient, since it offers opportunities for the adoption of languishing poses on the sofa and the airing of the latest thing in *negligées* and boudoir caps.

Just as there are some women who cultivate the invalid habit and revel in pillows and chicken-broth, so there are young man of patriotic soul must divest himself of his garments in a bare and draughty room furnished scantily with a few packing-cases. Chairs there are none, so he must e'en cast his good underwear and faultless suit upon the dingy floor, where the doctor walks about on them impartially.

How a man can be expected to breathe evenly and be his normal self while his best clothes are being ground to pulp before his eyes, is a matter beyond human power to solve. It is quite possible that excess of emotion, mistaken by the doctor for palpitation or the flutterings of a weak heart, may have lost several recruits to his Majesty's Army.

Doctors are as various as *hors d'œuvres*, and there is an art in selecting the one most suited to one's individual needs. The "soon-put-you-right" type who persists in treating your complaint as a mere nothing, and cracks jokes as he writes your prescription, will put new life into a doleful patient, while he of the impressive bedside manner is the one for the man who only stays in bed because his wife has hidden all his clothes.

Specialists are, of course, a tribe unto themselves; an atmosphere of mystic calm pervades their consulting-rooms, and the only real thing about them is their facility for pocketing guineas. They have a genius for extracting information which many a journalist might envy. In five minutes they become possessed of all your family history, and have you neatly pigeon-holed and labelled in the recesses of their brain, and you emerge condemned to a trip round the world or a

"Awaiting the Verdict"—Mr. Reg. F. Smith portrays the ordeal of the would-be recruit.

Mr. Alfred Leete depicts the country yokes who has never been ill and visits the doctor in a spirit of child-like awe.

others whose greatest joy is nursing. Give them a placid patient, a thermometer, and an array of medicine bottles, and they will ask no more of life. They will spend hours converting three pounds of steak into a thimbleful of beef-tea, and speak of the sick room with bated breath, as if it were some species of shrine.

Sometimes the patient suffers considerably, for it is wearing to be roused every half-hour that one's pillow may be shaken up or one's hot-water bottle refilled. Indeed, in a case of this kind the chief danger is that the invalid may be killed by kindness, and succumb to a surfeit of face-washing, lowered blinds, and eau-de-cologne.

At the other end of the pole is the person who has no patience with illness, and takes it as a personal affront if any of her household are laid up. She has usually the constitution of a rhinoceros, and can eat pickles for supper without a tremor. She calls in the doctor under protest, and receives his instructions concerning milk diet with a tolerant smile, while making inward reservations in favour of boiled mutton and caper sauce, or whatever the family dinner may consist of.

"A Rear Attack."—Mr. Starr Wood's idea of a fashionable lady's visit to the doctor.

"Seeing the Doctor in Bananaland."—Mr. Thompson gives us a type of physician whose bedside manner would leave much to be desired.

There are no pleasant little consolations allowed to the invalid under the care of this ruthless lady, who douches the room with violent disinfectant, and makes it a prohibited area for flowers. She has a heavy hand with the bedclothes, and shakes up pillows as though she was shaking out the hall mats. A tempting meal is beyond her achievement, and she will serve up beef tea in a pudding-basin, and wail long and loudly if the patient jibs at an iron spoon.

In fact, she makes illness so vastly unpleasant that one is forced to make a quick recovery in order to get out of her clutches, and escape from a captivity which is only one degree better than being in gaol.

ONLY ONE MORE SET! ENTER NOW, OR YOU MAY BE TOO LATE!

£1,000 IN CASH

OFFERED IN OUR

GREAT PICTURE PUZZLE CONTEST.

FIRST PRIZE: £500.

SECOND PRIZE £200 THIRD PRIZE £100 FOURTH PRIZE £50

Ten Prizes of £5 Pathéphones (with records),
One Hundred Prizes of £1 each.

HOW TO ENTER THE CONTEST TO-DAY.

The first 120 pictures appeared in the "Royal Magazine" for July, August, September, October, November, December, January, February, March, and April. Copies of all the numbers except July may be obtained through any newsagent for 4½d each (December Number 6d.), or the nine numbers and a set of the July pictures will be sent post free for 4s. from the Publisher, "Royal Magazine," 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

ON the following page you will find a set of twelve pictures representing the names of railway stations which have been selected by the Editor, and another set of pictures will appear next month in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE. These prizes are offered to the readers who discover the names of the railway stations represented under the conditions below.

WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO.

Competitors are required to write clearly in ink beneath each picture the name of the station they believe it represents, fill in their names and addresses in the space provided, cut out the page, and keep it until further instructions appear in THE ROYAL MAGAZINE. The last set of Picture Puzzles will appear in the June Number of THE ROYAL, published on May 22nd, 1915, making 144 pictures in all.

EXAMPLE.

DART MOUTH.

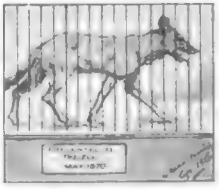
KEEP YOUR LISTS UNTIL THE DATE FOR SENDING IN IS ANNOUNCED.

READ THESE CONDITIONS CAREFULLY.

1. Write the name of each station clearly in ink. One name only is allowed under each picture.
2. No alterations may be made in the names. If you have made a mistake, cross out the word and write it afresh. When you have filled up your list cut it out and keep it till we tell you what to do with it.
3. Competitors may send in as many complete series of pictures as they please, but each complete series will be judged independently. Sets must be fastened together in the top left-hand corner.
4. The prize of £500 will be paid to the competitor from whom the Editor receives a complete series of pictures with all the names correct of the actual stations as represented. If no competitor sends in a correct list the prize of £500 will go to the sender of the most nearly correct list. In the event of ties the prizes will be divided.
5. The Editor of the ROYAL will not be responsible for the loss or non-delivery of any attempt, and proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of receipt or delivery.
6. No member of the staff of the ROYAL MAGAZINE may enter for this competition.
7. Only the names of railway stations found in Pearson's List of Railway Stations will be admitted. This list is obtainable for 3d. through any newsagent or bookstall, or it will be sent post free for three penny stamps by The Publisher, Room 14, THE ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.
8. Competitors must agree to abide by these conditions, and the Editor's decision is in every respect final.

TWELFTH SET OF PICTURE PUZZLES (Nos. 121–132).

121. .....



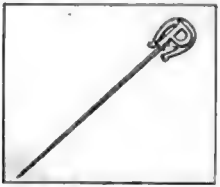
122. .....

123. .....

124. .....

125. .....

126. .....



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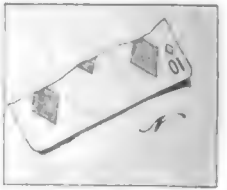

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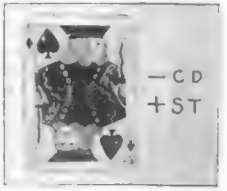


132. .....

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

Under FALSE PRETENCES

By

Dorothy Rose

"In the afternoon they came unto a land
Where it was always afternoon."

I.

He took off his hat.

"Excuse me," he said, "but is this No. 6 Craven Mansions?"

His accent was unmistakably American. The slim, grey-eyed girl who held open the door smiled in response to a searching glance from a pair of intensely blue eyes, whose boyishness contrasted strikingly with the firm lines of mouth and chin. His lean, clean-shaven face was sufficiently trustworthy to impel her to open the door wider.

"This is No. 6B," she replied, and he noticed that her golden-brown hair waved charmingly round her forehead. "6A is across the landing."

"You see, it's like this." The young man smiled reassuringly. "I don't know which I want. I am looking for a young lady whose married sister, Mrs. Harrison, is a friend of mine in the States. I've lost the card with the name and address, and all I remember is that the sister's name is Marjorie, and that she lives at Craven Mansions, Chelsea. You see, I've promised Mrs. Harrison to give her a real good time, and I'd hate to break my promise. Perhaps you can help me?"

"Perhaps I can." Margery's grip of the door handle slackened. Her dimpled chin tilted with the air of one who burns her boats behind her. "My name is Margery," she said—"Margery Neil."

"That's it!" In a moment she found her hand seized in his big brown one. "I remember now, it was Neil or Neave, or something like that. You see, they always spoke of you as Marjorie. My! but it is bully to find you!" he cried as he stepped into the hall.

For a moment Margery was speechless swept off her feet by the swiftness with which this very alert young man had pounced upon her wilfully misleading statement—a statement born of loneliness and a girlish craving for joy and pleasure.

An hour earlier she had returned from the office where she acted as secretary to the editor of *The Regent*, thoroughly forlorn and out of sorts.

While she cleared the supper table and washed up her rosebud china in the tiny kitchen, her thoughts had flown to Marjorie Neave, a butterfly little person who lived across the landing at No. 6A. Marjorie spent her evenings dining and theatre-going at other people's expense, or in keeping her wardrobe at the level required by stalls and fashionable restaurants. She had always a selection of young men in tow—sleek-headed individuals with velvety voices and a discriminating taste in chocolates.

Now Marjorie Neave was away travelling with a rich aunt; her namesake remembered she had been expecting a visit from Michael Bradley, a young American, and a great friend of her married sister, whose husband was a prospector and continually on the move.

The idea came to her all in a moment—since Marjorie was not here to share the good time, why should not she take the opportunity the gods offered, she whose youth had known so little gaiety?

"Then you're Mr. Bradley?" she said cordially, as she led the way into her little domain. "Please sit down and tell me all the news."

Michael Bradley was a good talker, and

missed none of the little intimate details that mean so much to those who are parted.

"As a matter of fact, I haven't got Mrs. Harrison's address," he ended, "and anyhow, I never write letters," a failing for which Margery was devoutly thankful. "It certainly *is* good to be in London again. Remember, it's up to you to help me enjoy myself, Miss Neil," he added with an appreciative eye for the glint of the firelight on her soft, brown hair.

"I'm perfectly willing." Margery felt a thrill of delicious anticipation; her lips lost their droop and curved in a happy smile. "You mustn't forget that I am a bread-winner during the day, though, and have only the evenings and week-ends free."

"Ah! yes—your sister did say something about an office." Michael Bradley rose to his feet. "I, too, have to hustle in the day-time. Fact is, I've got a new job over here. I've done a bit of journalism in my time, and I've got an appointment as sub. on *The Regent*. Pretty decent magazine, isn't it?"

Margery's eyes danced; her fingers played an excited tattoo on the chair arm. "Excellent!" she asserted gravely. "Best six-pennyworth on the market; London's leading magazine; best stories, finest illustrations, and choicest articles. Produced absolutely regardless of cost by a staff whose genius has never been equalled."

"Dear me!" Bradley assumed an air of mock dismay. "I shall never be able to live up to such talent. I heard that Mr. Harcourt, the editor, was very clever, but I didn't know it was an 'all star' staff. He did say that his secretary was a treasure, though."

"No! Did he?" Margery laughed joyously. "That's the nicest thing he's ever said about me."

"About you?" Bradley looked frankly puzzled. "You don't mean——"

Margery dropped him a curtsey. "Yes, I'm the treasure," she said gaily. "One hundred and forty words a minute and spelling guaranteed."

"Then we shall be on *The Regent* together," he cried, holding out his hand. "What colossal luck for me! If the editor has as excellent taste in fiction as he has in secretaries, I don't wonder it's a tip-top magazine."

II.

Bradley arrived at the office next morning to find Margery already typing away merrily.

"You share this room with me," she told him to his joy. "I hope the typing won't disturb you."

Bradley was sure it wouldn't. He had soon discovered that from his desk he would have an excellent view of Margery's pretty profile as she typed, and what more could any man desire? She had just exhibited with much pride the swept and garnished cupboard where she kept all original drawings, and was trying to explain the difference between a line and a half-tone block when Mr. Harcourt swept into the room and clamoured for his new sub.

Teatime brought a welcome lull, and over the sumptuous iced cake Bradley insisted on providing, Margery expounded many things to him. Afterwards he applied himself to a pile of MSS., and endeavoured to forget such things as dimpled chins and dancing eyes.

In the course of the next few weeks Bradley suffered many things, and under the perfunctory though able tuition of Owen Harcourt, came to a full and amazed understanding of his new duties.

He learnt that the sins of the editor, the authors, and the artists are all visited on the sub., that though an MS. might lie unedited on his chief's desk for days, it was he who was blamed if the story was late for press; that it was he who was expected to harry the printers and put the fear of death into the dilatory art editor, and get rid of importunate callers who had not the right of entry into the editorial sanctum.

To Margery he was something of a puzzle. His ignorance of routine was colossal, but he knew the copyright laws by heart. Moreover he spent money with a freedom unheard of in a sub. whose weekly salary was probably less than double her own, insisted on providing expensive cake for tea, and showed a marked predilection for taxis. Her amazement increased when he took one of the first-floor flats at Craven Mansions, and whisked her off on a furnishing expedition in which he strode gaily into the most expensive shops, and bought what he fancied without even inquiring the price.

By the time they sat down to discuss tea and muffins Margery was breathless and pink with reproachful excitement. Bradley, who had just decided that saxe blue should be sacred to girls with golden-brown hair and grey eyes, and that a small black velvet hat was the last word in millinery, smiled quite unabashed.

"No use buying cheap stuff, you know. Do have one of these pink cakes. Yes, more tea, please, and lots of cream. I shall

She had just exhibited with much pride the swept and garnished cupboard where she kept all original drawings . . . . . when Mr. Harcourt swept into the room and clamoured for his new sub.

have a pretty dandy flat by the time I get all these odds and ends fixed up."

And, after all, what could she say when a handsome young man, with frank blue eyes and a persuasive smile, sat opposite and chatted as blithely as though he had not just spent about a year's income on furniture for a five-roomed flat?

Indeed she found it very pleasant to have such a genial neighbour. They frequently went home together, and Margery grew to look forward to those rides on the top of the 'bus through the grey streets with their winking yellow lights and shadowy buildings. It was a new and pleasant sensation to be piloted safely home, and she had had sufficient experience of crowded trains and 'buses to appreciate it.

True to his promise to her supposed sister, Bradley, once settled down in his flat, proceeded to give Margery what he called "a real good time." And the girl, once started, took readily to the *rôle* of butterfly. She bought a new evening frock, a deliciously fluffy thing of pearly ninon with a girdle of old rose, and a satin cloak to match, which fell about her slim young figure in glorious sheeny folds. Thus clad she ran the gauntlet of critical eyes at the fashionable restaurants, and walked into the stalls at the theatre as though they were her rightful place.

Whatever the reason for this prodigality

Margery could not deny its charm. To rush from the office, bolt a bun and a cup of tea, and stand a weary hour outside the pit-door is one thing; to be whisked to the theatre in a taxi, and sit luxuriously in the best seats, with a charmingly attentive young man at her side, and a pink-sashed box of chocolates on her lap, was quite another. Margery enjoyed it with the fresh, heartfelt joy of the girl who has always had to submit her best clothes to the tender mercies of 'bus or train, and bought her own chocolates at four ounces for 3½d.

III.

Happiness and a new interest in life brought added beauty to the young secretary; her cheeks grew rounder and flaunted a becoming pink, her grey eyes lost their wistfulness and became gaily provocative.

It happened one day that Mr. Harcourt had had one of his periodical bursts of energy, and flung to the four corners of the earth, *via* his secretary, a battalion of MSS. and a score or two of politely regretful letters. Once keyed up to the necessity for weeding his desk nothing short of an earthquake would have stopped him, and it was a regrettable fact that the attacks usually took place about five o'clock.

It was nearly half-past seven when Margery toiled up to her flat and flung her hat and coat on the little oak bed with its pretty flowered bedspread. Usually she enjoyed preparing supper, but to-night even the effort of laying the table, set snugly before the fire, was too much for her. She was just deciding to go to bed without any supper when a knock came at the door.

It was Bradley who stood on the threshold, a tiny jug dangling from his finger. "I wonder if you'd lend me a drop of milk?" he asked. "I'm dying for coffee, and my charlady's coffee is a most poisonous decoction, so I always make it myself."

"Of course I will. Do come in." Margery fetched a jug and filled the one he held out. The light fell on her white face and tired eyes, and a quick frown furrowed the man's forehead

"I say, you're dead beat," he said. "I shall wring Harcourt's neck to-morrow."

Margery forced an April smile. "I'm just off to bed," she explained. "I feel about fifty to-night."

"And I bet you haven't had any supper. No, I thought not—women are all alike." Bradley put down the jug, his blue eyes fixed searchingly on the girl's wistful face.

"I'm too tired," began Margery.

"Of course you are, but I'm not."

Already he was pulling up the blue-cushioned settee to the fire and collecting all the cushions he could find.

"This is your place. I'm in command, and all you've got to do is to obey orders. I'm a first-rate cook, and I've got the jolliest chafing-dish downstairs.

"There!" he went on triumphantly, as he stirred the fire into a blaze. "We'll have supper in no time. You don't mind my having it with you, do you?" he called from the kitchen, where he was making great play with the crockery.

"Mind! I'd love it." Margery gave a little sigh of supreme content. Never in all her hard-working young life had she been the object of such solicitude. She found it delicious and a little amazing. As in a dream she watched while with deft hands Bradley set the table and performed mystic rites with a silver chafing-dish.

"Ever tasted creamed lobster?" he asked cheerily. "No, then you've never really lived. Just stay where you are and I'll bring yours on a charger. What luck, you've got brown bread; it's *the* thing with creamed lobster."

A sense of great contentment and well-being stole over Margery; it was delightful to be able to relax, to feel that, if only for an hour, she had a strong arm and a capable hand between her and the strenuous world in which she lived.

And Bradley, drinking his coffee from one of the two rose and gold cups which were her pride and joy, found his companion more charming than ever.

"I don't think it's altogether good for you to live here alone," he remarked as, having cleared the supper things, he stood on the hearthrug and surveyed her with a very gentle smile on his firm, alert young face.

"I couldn't give up my flat," Margery told him, raising her frank grey eyes to his. "I think every girl longs for a corner of her own, a place where she can give vent to her bedroom-slipper moods and exercise her taste in cretonnes. That sort of thing's born in a girl, and if she doesn't marry she too often has to stifle it."

Bradley nodded as he took the hand she held out in his. Hitherto there had been between them nothing but a frank *camaraderie;* now something in his touch, a hint of admiration in his eyes, brought a quick blush to Margery's cheeks; she stole a timid glance at his earnest face.

The appeal went straight to his heart; he

dropped her hand, and, with a cheery admonition to go straight to bed, betook himself to his own quarters.

As Margery in the comfort of dressing-gown and slippers brushed her wavy hair by the fire, her conscience gave her a nasty twinge. Her deception loomed up terrifying and unforgiveable before her. What would he say if he knew? She had thought to drift on, but now in her heart of hearts she knew that sooner or later would come a time when he must be told! She was a woman, and the touch of his hand had told her what his lips had refrained from putting into words.

IV.

It was three weeks later when Bradley suddenly discovered he had been on *The Regent* six months, and resolved to keep high festival in honour of the occasion. The fates having kindly ordained that the day should be a Saturday, he planned to spend it in the country, and ten o'clock saw a beautiful little grey two-seater drawn up before the door of Craven Mansions.

It was a perfect day in spring; fleecy clouds scudded joyously across a blue sky; pale golden sunlight made a shining pathway for the little car, and in the gardens daffodils reared their yellow heads, and hyacinths, pink, blue, and white, scented the air.

Bradley drove with the ease and skill of an expert; his evident proficiency with the motor was one of the things which puzzled his companion, as was also his possession of an expensive motor coat. But to-day the only thing that marred her enjoyment was the thought of the confession she must make if—if, well, if things fell out as her woman's instinct told her they were likely to.

They lunched in the car which Bradley drew up beside a dim, green wood where primroses beckoned, and moss made a velvet carpet for the feet. Margery forbore to wonder at the extravagance which had provided a sumptuous luncheon-basket, and feasted lightheartedly on game pie and lobster salad.

They stopped at a wayside inn for tea; a buxom landlady lavished her best of home-made cakes and jam on them, and they sat blissfully at a table drawn up to a window looking out into an orchard which was a fairyland of pink and white blossom.

After tea they strolled into the orchard and watched the sun sinking in a splendour of rose and gold behind the purple hills. The last gleams fell on Margery's bare head as they turned to retrace their steps; she looked very winsome and very, very happy. Michael Bradley's arm stole round her of a sudden, and for a moment she leant against him in a tremor of happiness.

"Margery, little girl—I love you," he whispered, and bent his head to hers.

But Margery slipped from his embrace, her eyes big and piteous, her lips trembling.

Michael Bradley's arm stole round her of a sudden, and for a moment she leant against him in a tremor of happiness. "Margery little girl—I love you," he whispered.

"I don't know how to tell you," she said. "I'm so afraid you won't forgive me."

"I'll forgive you anything, sweetheart," he promised, looking down at her tenderly.

Encouraged by his smile, by the trust his frank face and straight blue eyes always inspired, Margery told him her pitiful little secret.

"I was feeling so lonely," she said, very girlish and appealing in her anxiety, "and I did long for a little fun—not the 'look-at-every-penny' fun I had had to be content with, but the real fun other girls seemed to have. You looked so big and comforting, and I—I felt I must have the good time you spoke of, even if I did get it under false pretences."

Michael Bradley laughed as he drew her unresisting to his side.

"I, too, have been obtaining something under false pretences," he confessed, "so we can cry quits. What will you say, sweetheart, if I tell you that I am not a struggling journalist, that my surname is not Bradley at all, and that my father is a wealthy publisher in the States?"

"What *is* your name?"

Margery raised her head from his broad shoulder, amusement and relief in her sweet face.

"Michael Bradley Wilson," he said, repressing a smile.

"Not the son of Mark Wilson, the Magazine King of New York?"

"The very same." The young man nodded blithely. "I came over here to get an insight into English methods of running magazines. That's why I altered my name, in case they wouldn't let me behind the scenes. I've been helping my father run the business over there, but I've never been a sub. before, so part of my ignorance *was* genuine," he finished with a mischievous smile.

"And to think I accused you of extravagance," she murmured, "and Mr. Harcourt treated you like a raw know-nothing journalist! What will he say when he knows?"

"I don't care a tinker's curse what *he* says, sweetheart," declared Michael. "The point is what do you say?"

For answer Margery stood on the tips of her little grey shoes and raised her face to his.

"I say you're a dear," she whispered softly as their lips met.

RIVER REGRETS.

A prettier maiden never deigned to decorate a punt
  Than dainty little, golden-headed Maisie;
Enthroned on rose-pink cushions she wrought havoc with the boys,
  But really she was scandalously lazy!
She quite declined to wield a pole, but watched adoring swains
  Grow purple in the face without a quiver,
But Tom and Dick and Harry still competed for the chance
  Of taking her each Sunday on the river.

But Tom and Dick and Harry come no longer to her call,
  They've given up the punt-pole for the rifle,
They've shed their snowy flannels and wear khaki for the nonce;
  No longer on the river can they trifle.
And Maisie droops alone, forlorn, and wishes she had learnt
  To dally with a punt-pole or an oar,
And spends her Sundays watching other girls propel their boats
  While she is doomed to spend the day ashore.

Rosemary North.

[These few bright scintillations, intended, and rightly, to be funny, are gathered from all the most satisfactory and expensive sources for the benefit of H.M. Forces. Great laughter is confidently anticipated in all ships of war, regiments, batteries, etc., and some people *may* send in a good story in return. A pack of ROYAL cards or a silver pencil-case will be given for every accepted story, joke, bit of verse, or drawing. Please address envelopes to The C.O., ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.—Ed. R.M.]

PROFESSIONAL RISKS.

"And aren't ye afraid o' gettin' killed?" said Mrs Murphy to Pat O'Brien, who had joined the Army.

"Sure, an phwat of it," he replied proudly; "it's me living, ain't it?"

THE NEUTRAL ATTITUDE.

We never appreciated quite so keenly as at the present time how rare was the quality of the foresight exercised by our forefathers in emigrating from Europe.—*Wabash Plain Dealer.*

* * *

After all, we have no complaint that the Atlantic is 3,000 miles wide.—*Los Angeles Express.*

EVIDENTLY A NAPOLEON.

The young recruit was full of enthusiasm, but his little weakness was that he believed all he was told. His comrades therefore arranged a few pleasant surprises.

He was busy showing them a wire he had just received: "Glad to know you have joined the Army.—Kitchener," when along came the Corporal with another message: "Hearty congratulations; your support of my Army invaluable.—The King."

His comrades were beginning to felicitate him, when the sergeant-major sent for him to know if the following message was also for him:

"For Heaven's sake remain neutral.—Wilhelm."

A RAPID ADVANCE.

CORPORAL WILLIAM: "Dear me, how things alter!"

CORPORAL GEORGE: "How so?"

CORPORAL WILLIAM: "Last Friday I was just a billet; yesterday my landlord's daughter called me 'Billy'; to-day, as she has gone away for the week-end, I am sending her a *billet-doux;* and at length, when I ask if I may be her husband, I trust she will reply: 'Billy, *do!*'"

FROM OUR NAVAL CORRESPONDENT.

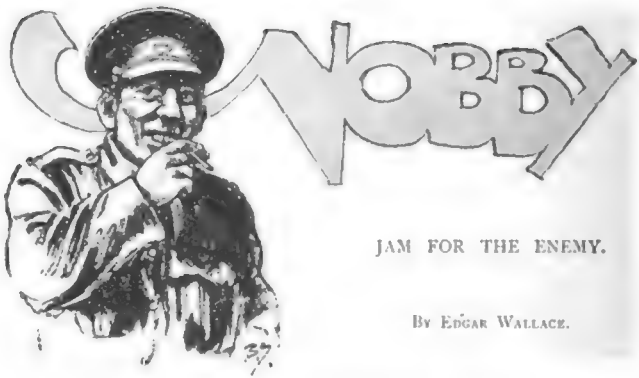
There is no hair to be found on the mast-head; the mast is one of the bare poles which the ship scuds under in a storm. The bight of a rope you may bind, to your sorrow, has a smart taste, if you take it that it means a mouthful.

Don't ask the captain why he has the sails "set" and the rigging "standing."† It would also be imprudent to inquire the time of the day by the starboard watch. The boatswain's pipe will not be lent you to smoke. It is not necessary that you learn the art of self-defence in order to "box" the compass.

Don't imagine that you can steer a ship because you have been a tiller of the soil. You need not be afraid of getting shot because it is "blowing great guns."

The cook does not kindle his fire with chips from the ship's log. The best way to learn what sea life is is to go to sea for yourself; be a son of the sea for a season.

† This refers to gear for meteorology.—Ed.



JAM FOR THE ENEMY.

By Edgar Wallace.

Nobby's bright ideas are sometimes fraught with awkward results. How a trap laid for the Germans came within an ace of annihilating some of his fellow soldiers is graphically told in the following amusing story.

"THERE'S ten ways of finishin' the war," said Smithy, "an' very likely there's more, only I have only talked it over with ten people. There's the celebrated way of bringin' Russians through England, there's the idea of takin' Berlin an' destroyin' von Hindenberg's time table, an' last but not least—skippin' all the other suggestions—there's the plan which is in favour in almost every club in London, of destroyin' the German Fleet an' landin' an army at Hamburg. Nobby Clark, whom I might describe as one of the grandest geniuses that ever came into the army, had a plan which hasn't been heard outside of a s'lect circle.

"'What we ought to do,' he sez, 'is to go up into the Alps to the place where the Rhine rises, stick a cork in the spring, an' stop the Rhine from runnin'. If there wasn't no Rhine there'd be no watch on the Rhine, an' if there wasn't a watch we'd be able to nip across before anybody saw us.'

"Another idea of Nobby's was one which I daresay you've heard about. It wasn't exactly to stop the war, but, so to speak, to stop the bit of war which was operatin' on our front.

"We held a line of trenches near Y—— or Z——, an' our main difficulty was to persuade the enemy that the trench line was held by about 90,000 men. In a sense we was in the air, an' even our supports was well in advance of where the line should have run.

"Owin' to the fact that we had a little river on our right, an' a swamp on our left, we could take liberties, but the unfortunate fellows of 'D' company, who were in the support trenches an' had to bring up supplies an' ammunition, got it properly in the neck.

"Sometimes the enemy was satisfied with snipin', but now an' then, especially after nightfall, the parties that came up to the firin' trench would be raided from the marsh, an' have all their stores pinched. If they got away without bein' pinched themselves or shot a bit, they was very lucky.

"We could never find all the paths across the marsh—there must have been half-a-dozen—an' no sooner had we laid a trap for the Germans in one place than they come up in another.

"It got a bit annoyin', especially after 'C' company, who had been holdin' the firin' trenches, lost a day's rations.

"'We wouldn't have minded,' says one of the fellows from 'C' bitterly, 'only the pinchers pinched the box with the jam in it.'

"'Jam's bad for you,' sez Nobby, 'besides which it's pretty bad for the enemy,' he sez. 'You've probably done the army a good turn by losin' it.'

"A couple of days later, when it was our turn to be in the firin' trenches, the same thing happened. The supports comin' up with provisions was attacked an' routed, an' the stores taken.

"'This ain't war,' sez Nobby indignant; 'this is barbarity—it ain't civilised to rob

the wounded of their comforts. When I say wounded,' sez Nobby carefully, 'I mean heroes who are likely to be wounded at any minute.'

'It was about this time that Nobby got his grand idea for finishin' the war. He had a long talk with our company officers when we came back to billets, and the captain, who was a bit of a sport, went over to see the R.E. C.O. It was Nobby's plan, and Nobby's grand idea all through.

"They emptied a new packin'-case, and filled it full of all kinds of things that the Germans did not want. There were little packets of cordite, a box of nitro - glycerine, or somethin' that made the same noise, pieces of old iron, and samples of explosives collected far and near by the R.E. officer, and the whole was arranged so that when you prised the lid off, somethin' would happen which gave you a better idea of an earthquake than anythin' which had ever been invented. It was a nice new packin'-case, an' when they had nailed it down very carefully they stencilled on it 'Comforts for the troops' and 'Jam for the soldiers,' and Nobby added, what I might term an artistic touch, by stickin' on a card, 'From little Minnie Brown, with love for all the dear heroes at the Front.'

"'That ought to get 'em, sir,' sez Nobby enthusiastic, and the R.E. officer and our company officers were highly delighted.

"They emptied a new packin'-case, and filled it full of all kinds of things that the Germans did not want.

"The general idea was that the case should be taken up to the edge of the marsh, an' left carelessly near the end of one of the paths which we had spotted.

"All might have gone well if it had not been for the Wigshires. We never got on with the Wigshires owin' to a slight disagreement about football some years ago.

"Although since Mons we had met all the horrors of war, we never had the bad luck to find ourselves quartered alongside the Wigs. We'd been shelled, aeroplanes had dropped bombs on us, we'd had our trenches blown in, we had had the roads blown up, we'd had poisoned water, typhoid fever, an' had gone without warm food for days together, but

we'd never had the crownin' misfortune of findin' ourselves side by side with the first battalion of the 150th (Peakey Blinders) Royal Wigshire Regiment. It is not for me to run down chaps in the army, but we know that whenever it has been possible for the Wigshires to lose theirselves they've done it. If any convoy takes the wrong road an' finds itself in High Street, Germany, you can bet your life it's the Wigshires. The only wise thing they ever did was to keep away from the marsh road. At least they tried to.

"What happened exactly on the fatal 7th of January I've never been able to find out. We were at a post halfway between the trench and the billets when we saw a lot of the Wigshires comin' back in a hurry.

"'We've had a terrible fight,' sez one fellow to Nobby, and he was so agitated he could hardly get the words out; 'attacked, as it were, by overwhelmin' forces, like von Kluck attacked French, we made a noble resistance, an——'

"'Tell us your sad story,' sez Nobby, 'without makin' a despatch of it, an' me and my gallant friends will be very much obliged.'

"The long and short of it was that the Wigshires had once more lost their supplies.

"'The wonder to me,' sez Nobby, 'is that you don't lose your bloomin' heads!'

"The matter might have ended here, only the next day some of the Wigshires put it about that some of their comforts had been seen in the Ancaster supply trenches, an' a deputation of the Wigshires came along to investigate.

"'It's a very funny thing,' sez one of the Wigshires, a chap named Wingsey, 'you chaps have got more fried bacon an' jam than you can eat, an' we've got nothin'.'

"'If it amuses you,' sez Nobby, 'me an' the other heroes of the Ancasters are very satisfied.'

"'We don't want to make no accusations,' sez this chap, 'an' we don't want to do nothin' unpleasant——'

"'There is two ways out of these trenches,' sez Nobby very cold-like; 'you can go over the parapet an' have a talk with the Germans, or you can go back the way you came. Another way,' Nobby sez thoughtfully, 'is to wait for the ambulance to come an' fetch you.'

"These little disturbances are always croppin' up. Sometimes you hear talk about it in the trenches; sometimes you have to wait till you get back to billets before you get any news.

"We were in billets, the Wigshires havin' relieved us, an' were settlin' down to a quiet country life, when a couple of Wigshire chaps drifted into our village. They had been sent back with a convoy of sick to the collectin'-station, an' by their mysterious hints and their sarcastic manner, we knew that somethin' was up.

"'It is a very curious thing,' sez one of these Wigshire chaps.

"'You are,' sez Nobby.

"'It is a very curious thing,' this chap went on, 'that our regiment should find some of its comforts near your lines.'

"'Speak plainly, Moses,' sez Nobby. 'You alarm me.'

"'To rob the poor bloomin' soldier,' the Wigshire chap went on, 'is one of the lowest crimes I have ever heard about.'

"'Hear, hear!' sez Nobby.

"'We've found one of our boxes of supplies,' sez the chap. 'We found it very close to the marsh road, not one hundred yards from your supply trenches. There it was lyin' *doggo* by the side of the road where nobody would have thought of lookin' for it.'

"Nobby jumped to his feet.

"'Here,' he sez, agitated, 'what is this you are talkin' about?'

"'A packin'-case,' sez the Wigshire man very emphatic—'a Wigshire packin'-case with comforts for the troops sent by a young lady in England with her best love. What the Ancasters pinched, and what we found.'

"'Do you mean to tell me,' sez Nobby, turnin' pale, 'that you found that packin'-case by the marsh?'

"'I do,' sez the other chap, 'an', what's more, I was the fellow that found it. To-night,' he sez, 'when the fellows are eatin' them comforts——'

"Nobby didn't wait for any more, but dashed out of the barn an' made his way to the little cottage which our officers were usin' as a mess. In three minutes the bugles were soundin' to assembly, and 'B' and 'C' companies had fallen in.

"'We had better send as many as we can spare,' I heard the Colonel say to the Adjutant. 'We don't know to what part of the trenches this confounded box has got!'

"'Whose idea was it?' sez the Colonel.

"'Private Clark's of "B" company,' replies the Adjutant.

"'What a brain that fellow has!' sez the Colonel, but he sez it in a way which made Nobby squirm.

"One of the Wigshires was just puttin' the edge of his entrenchin' tool between the lid an the box when Nobby fell on him."

"It was growin' dark, an' the roads underfoot were thick with mud, but we marched quicker than we had ever marched before.

"It was Spud Murphy, Nobby, and me who struck the section of the trench where the box was. One of the Wigshires was just puttin' the edge of his entrenchin' tool between the lid an' the box when Nobby fell on him.

"'Here, what's the game?' said the chap, an' one of the Wigshire officers came up.

"'What is the meanin' of this?' he sez. But before we could answer, the sentry at one end of the trench loosed off a round of ammunition and shouted 'Look out!'

"It was a bit of luck," Smithy went on, "that we came up in time. A whole brigade of German infantry had been pushed forward against the Wigshires' front. From 8 till 10.30 the Wigshires and the Ancasters fought side by side until the enemy blew up a bit of the trench and the order came to retire.

"In the support trenches we rallied, drivin' back two fresh attacks, an' gradually the firin' died down on our front, an' at 12 o'clock there was almost silence.

"'This is a nice thing,' sez Wingsey, of the Wigshires bitterly. 'They have not only got our trenches, but they have got our bloomin' jam!'

"He had hardly got the words out of his mouth before there came an explosion in the trench we had left louder than any other explosion I have ever heard.

"'What is that?' sez our company officer, who was standin' close behind me an' Nobby.

"'That, sir,' sez Nobby proudly, 'is the jam!'"

(Another story of the irrepressible Nobby will appear next month.)

For The Children In War Time

Miss Phyllis Monkman, of the Alhambra Theatre, has very kindly consented to appeal this year in the ROYAL on behalf of the Fresh Air Fund—the Children's Charity. It exists, as most readers of the ROYAL know, to send City children to the country in the summer time. Ninepence pays for a day's holiday for one child. £8 2s. pays for a party of 200, with necessary attendants, and ten shillings sends a child to the country for a fortnight. All working expenses are borne by the promoters, and the whole of the money subscribed directly benefits the children. Please send subscriptions to the Hon. Sec. F.A.F., care of The ROYAL MAGAZINE, 18 Henrietta Street, London, W.C.—Ed. R.M.

I HAVE never appealed for any cause before, but it seems to me that even an inexperienced pleader cannot fail to succeed on behalf of the Fresh Air Fund. I don't think even the hardest-hearted—and readers of the ROYAL are not hard-hearted people—could refuse to make children happy.

But it is war-time, and there are so many appeals . . .

I know there are. It seems as if we could never do enough for our soldiers and sailors, doesn't it? even if we were to give all we have. But if you think for a moment, and realise the strain of war-time—I don't mean the financial, but the mental, strain—and how we naturally put aside our usual pleasures and amusements, you will realise at once, I feel sure, that war-time is not jolly for little people.

Your own small children have not suffered; you make great efforts so that they shall not lose any of the joyousness that is their natural inheritance on account of a war that they hardly understand and did nothing to bring about. But things are not by any means so easy for the poor children of the cities.

War-time means hard times for the poor, and the children of the poor. It means dearer food, and so less food, dearer clothes, more hardships. And in the hot summer months, when little people flag and grow weary, there is no summer holiday to temper the heat of the sun and the dry dustiness of the mean streets. That is, there will be none, unless you come to the rescue.

Photo Weather & Page.

Miss Phyllis Monkman, of the Alhambra Theatre, who dances so delightfully, is very kindly appealing in the ROYAL this year on behalf of the Fresh Air Fund.

There is just one other thought before I finish.

Some of the most generous subscribers to the F.A.F. have always been our soldiers and sailors. Officers, non-commissioned officers, and men were alike eager to help, and I don't suppose there is a ship in the Navy that hasn't made a collection. This year they have other work to do.

Won't you take their places and support their favourite charity while they are laying down their lives for their country and ours?

Phyllis Monkman

The BROOM for BEAUTY

By Margaret H. Hallam

Busy people are the rule nowadays, and no one has much time to spare for physical culture. How to derive health and beauty from a daily wielding of the brush and broom is told in the following article.

There are such an endless number of cures nowadays that no one ought ever to be sick or sorry, and certainly no woman has the least excuse in the world for being plain.

There are scores of credulous people, cranks and faddists, who tell you they have been cured by having magic passes made over them, by thinking high thoughts, by wearing certain colours, by dancing bare-footon wet grass, clad in scanty draperies, by balancing on one leg, and so on, *ad infinitum*. I can quite believe that pirouetting on one's big toe for half-an-hour daily would so occupy one's mind that one would quite forget minor ailments. Let anyone who derives comfort from such and kindred exertions pursue them by all means.

But there are any number of men and women in the world who want to keep fit and have no time or inclination for fads, and cannot be induced to go in for even simple physical culture. It is a pity, for the conditions of

modern life make physical culture in some shape or form necessary for almost everyone.

For instance, heaps of people simply dread the winter; they are either martyrs to coughs, colds, and rheumatism, or they feel slack and liverish, and are perpetually in the blues.

Now I am fully aware that the liver is usually blamed for slackness and the blues also—sometimes it must be owned justly—but my opinion is that if everyone had a really good circulation, so that every crack and cranny of their bodies were nourished with good red blood and the waste matter carried off the system, one would practically never know a day's illness. They would, moreover, feel generally happy and contented with life, and would furthermore be rewarded by clear complexions, bright eyes, and thick, glossy hair. There is a list of inducements!

Unfortunately, a large percentage of people suffer from a very bad circulation, and go about looking pinched and miserable, blue-lipped, purple-fingered, and in desperately bad spirits all the winter long. As a remedy for this, I heartily commend to everyone daily exercise with those ordinary domestic implements, the broom and the brush.

Very beneficial results may be obtained with two hair-brushes held loosely, one in either hand. Start by tapping the shoulders smartly; then hold the brushes as depicted above, and [illegible] right, then left.

The average housewife often finds it very difficult to keep herself fit since she has seldom much time for outdoor exercise, but by wielding the broom and brush she will not only be benefiting her health, but also ministering to the well-being of her household. Here is a means of health which will cost her nothing, and can be obtained within the four walls of her home, and in the course of her ordinary duties.

If every woman and girl swept her carpets daily with a long broom, used the Turk's head energetically on her walls, went down on her hands and knees to sweep the stairs with dustpan and brush, and deftly whisked the dust from the crevices of her upholstered furniture, she would be as fit as possible, and would moreover become and remain agile and supple. A man can reap a considerable amount of benefit by plying the birch-broom on his garden paths or backyard briskly every morning.

Conducive as the use of the broom is to health and beauty, the ordinary hair-brush, wielded as a health instrument, is equally good.

First of all there is the ordinary use to which the hair-brush is daily put, *i.e.*, vigorous brushing of the scalp, which

Lying on the floor, [illegible] below the waist, working in circles, and always from right to left.

causes the blood to circulate freely in the head, and so clears the complexion as well as making the hair grow.

Then there is the extraordinary use as shown in the illustrations. Some of the most beneficial movements of Swedish massage are the percussion movements; there is, for instance, a movement known as "back hacking," which causes the blood simply to bound through the body and makes a man feel as fit as a fiddle. Unfortunately one cannot "back hack" oneself, but it is quite possible to gain a very similar result with two hair-brushes. They must be held loosely, all the movement being from the wrist. Start first of all by smartly tapping the shoulders, then hold the brushes as depicted in the photo on p. 82, and tap with them, held lightly, first right, then left.

After treating the back, percuss the chest, using lighter movements; then, lying on the floor, play a smart tattoo on the region below the waist; work in circles, always from right to left. It is scarcely necessary to add the blows must not be heavy enough to bruise the abdomen; people as a rule are much too afraid of hurting themselves to make such a warning needful.

These movements should be performed after the morning bath if possible; a couple of minutes is enough for each movement. The hair-brush treatment is an extraordinarily simple one, but it is as good as it well can be, and makes one feel as if the sun was shining, even if there is a thick fog or a dreary drizzle outside.

If people would only realise the immense benefits which these simple exercises will bestow, there would be a daily raid on the household brooms and brushes, and the members of the family would vie with one another in rising early to secure them. In fact, they would rise early in any case, for their new-found energy would not allow them to stay in bed.

NO WAY BUT THIS

". . . I will but sigh, and sleep.
Sweet, does death hurt? Thou canst not do me wrong;
I shall not lack thee, as I loved thee, long."

By M. Gray.

The midnight express was racing North.

Click-clack, click-clack, click-clack — the steady, swift rhythm of its flight along the steel road was like the quickened heart-beat of a fevered man.

Almost it seemed alive, this monster of steel and steam, sired by the thought of man, born of the labour of his hands.

Niel Malcolm, the well-known London surgeon, was not given to vain fancies, much less to any belief in presentiments, but the persistence with which the thought of possible disaster presented itself to his mind to-night began at last to disturb him seriously.

An indefinable sense of coming evil pressed in upon his consciousness with an ever-increasing weight; the comfortable first-class carriage, with its shrouded light, seemed filled with a haunting Presence striving to cry a warning that the ears could not hear, against some impending catastrophe.

Malcolm looked anxiously across the carriage at the pretty, sleepy face of his young wife. They had been married two years. She had but twenty-four years to his forty, but—or, possibly, therefore—their union was as perfect as even marriage can be when two persons love each other with mind, soul, and body.

The feeling of uneasiness which pervaded his imagination suddenly became acute terror, as his eyes dwelt lovingly on the sweet, sensitive face, the soft, grey eyes half hidden now by their lashes of silky blackness.

An agony of love and tenderness, an overwhelming wave of pity and protection, swelled up in Niel Malcolm's heart as he watched her. The strong instinct of a man to shield the woman he loves—even at the cost of his own life, if need be—took possession of him.

The quaint, sad cry of a little song he had read somewhere wove itself like a thread of fire through his tormented mind:

"Love-in-a-mist! Wet eyes and tangled hair—
Sad eyes that shine thro' lashes of dark rain—
Where have I known your mystery, your pain?
In what green gardens kissed your soft despair?"

The surgeon's trained and disciplined nerves were strangely jangled to-night.

In the need to touch her, to assure himself of her well-being, he rose and bent over her to re-arrange the light rug which lay across her knees, and to kiss gently the sleepy, dark eyes.

They were alone in the carriage; she slipped her arm round about his neck and drew him down beside her, so that she could nestle against his shoulder.

"Niel!"

"Yes, sweetest?"

"I wasn't asleep, you know. I was just watching you—thinking what a dear you are and how I love you. Do you know you've got the most beautiful mouth in all the world? I've never seen one like it."

Her husband laughed.

"I'm glad you like it, but it's like a rat-trap, you know—really. I'm afraid your

taste in beauty has been dulled by contact with me!"

She smiled up at him—the wise, quiet smile of a woman who loves.

"You are exactly everything that a man should be," she said with absolute conviction in her voice. Then, with a sudden strange touch of wistfulness: "Dear—it—if anything should ever happen to me—you will remember always how I loved you, won't you? No one else will ever make you forget that?"

The man's heart gave a thrill of foreboding pain, and as if thereby the hidden, intangible fear that had wrung his nerves for the last hour was instantly communicated to Yvonne, her face changed. A shadow fell over the beauty and mystery of its sweetness.

"Niel," she exclaimed in a choked voice —"Niel! There's something wrong. It's coming, nearer—something terrible—black —heavy. I can't breathe! Oh, Niel! Help me—hold me close! I'm frightened!"

Like a terror-stricken child she clung to him, burying her face on his breast, and through the motion of the train he could feel that she was shaking from head to foot.

Her need of him instantly steadied his own shaken nerves.

"My pet, what's the matter? There's nothing to be afraid of; we're quite safe. Look up, darling—there's nothing here. Everything's as right as rain! You're overtired, that's all. I ought to have insisted on having a sleeping-berth. I think we will prescribe a little brandy-and-water at once!"

She looked up at him, her face white and strained, but said nothing. Only she seemed to be listening—listening.

Her husband laid her back gently against the seat, rose, and bent over his hand-bag.

"Bother!" he exclaimed a moment later. "If that ass hasn't given me brandy neat, and no cup on the flask! Half-a-second, darling—I'll get some water from the dining-car. It's only a little way along!"

The next moment he was hurrying along the swinging corridor.

The dining-car was the fifth coach from his own, towards the rear end of the train, and when he reached it a few moments elapsed before he could discover a sleepy waiter and procure some water.

As he turned to retrace his steps, the violent jerk of the brakes, suddenly applied to the train's full speed, flung him heavily across the nearest table, and even as he fell, came the grinding crash of a collision, which merged instantly into an inferno of shrieks and screams, mingling with the hissing roar of escaping steam.

The dining-car swung over at a sharp angle, and then righted itself. Malcolm struggled to his feet, and dashed into the corridor, only to find his return barred—the next carriage was overturned. Like a madman he rushed back through the dining-car, and out through the nearest door into the night, now ringing with those awful cries of pain and fear.

As far as he could see, the whole length of the train ahead was off the rails—a tumbled mass of wreckage.

Where the fallen engine lay, a dull red glow coloured the darkness, but otherwise all lay in shadow, visible only by the faint starlight.

"Yvonne! Yvonne! Where are you?" Merciful God! where was she in this hideous chaos of splintered wood and bent, twisted iron, from the midst of which sounded every note in the gamut of human agony!

He *must* keep his head, must think, remember which compartment of the fifth coach from the dining-car had been theirs. If he could even find the coach itself in this fantastically piled heap of shattered steel and wood——

One, two, three—yes, that was three of them; but then came a sprawling heap in which he could distinguish no integral part. All the carriages nearer the engine were completely wrecked, mere heaps of *débris*.

Madly he tore at the splintered framework of what *might* have been their carriage, calling her name, begging her to answer, blind and deaf to the horrors about him, unconscious of the pain of his own hands.

Men ran past him, bringing what aid they could to the prisoned sufferers. He threw over his shoulders a passionate appeal for help, and two men stopped to assist him. One, a labourer from a farm near the scene of disaster, carried an iron crowbar, by means of which they were at last able to break away the side of the nearest coach, and there he found her.

She was only half-conscious, crushed beneath the terrible weight of the shattered coach. As, with a stifled cry, he fell on his knees beside her, she opened her eyes.

"Niel! You're not hurt? Oh, thank God! I prayed so hard. But—Niel—I can't move—and I'm so cold. I feel as if half of me is dead!"

The fatal words seemed to bring death itself into the heart of the man who loved her.

"You'll—you'll be better directly, darling," he assured her, trying to keep his voice steady. "We must get you out of this at once."

He sprang to his feet, and joined the two men, who were prising and heaving at the mass of wood and iron which held Yvonne down. Like demons the three worked. In silence, except for their panting breaths, at the extreme limit of their strength, they strained and pulled at the unyielding obstacle, exerting every ounce of muscle, calling upon every nerve. Alas! so far as any result went, they might as well have sat still. Nothing short of a steam-crane could have lifted that superincumbent weight even an inch.

"No use, sir!" groaned one of the men under his breath at last. "We can't do it!"

"We *can!*" returned Malcolm in a low, fierce voice—"we *must!* Now, altogether, men, once more. We can see better now!"

See better!

Because of the intense concentration of his mind on the thing before him, the urgent need to lift this crushing weight which held his darling captive, Niel Malcolm did not notice how ominous were his words. But as he spoke, one of the men labouring beside him leapt back and glanced down the wrecked train.

"Heaven above us! She's alight!" he gasped, and with the words there rang out above the confusion shouts for men to bring water from the only available source, the farm near at hand.

"Coom on, Bill!" cried the man who had spoken, to his fellow. "We canna move yon weight, but we may stop t' fire coming!" and disregarding Niel's frantic appeals to "try once more," the two men hurried away and were lost to view.

Left thus, Malcolm realised in a dull, sick way that he was helpless; there was no hope left—none at all. Silently, in a despair too deep for any word or cry, he knelt again beside the half-hidden form which he had striven so desperately, and uselessly, to free.

Her pretty head, with its soft masses of disordered hair, and white-rose face, was untouched, but the cruel weight lay diagonally across her from shoulder to waist.

As her husband crouched beside her, she lifted her free arm, and curved her hand round his bent head in the little half-maternal caress which every woman bestows at times on the man she loves.

The light was stronger now; they could see each other plainly, and at sight of the frozen, passionless despair in the face above her, Yvonne's wide, terror-haunted eyes filled with tears. She heard no more the dreadful cries around her; she forgot her own terrible position. The desire to comfort her beloved, to drive that strained misery from his dear face, filled her mind to the exclusion of every other thought.

"Dearest, don't—don't look like that," she said brokenly. "I can't bear it—indeed I can't. You've done all you can, and I'm not in pain. Perhaps they'll think of some way to move this iron thing when they come back. Why did they go away?"

"For water," he said dully—"at least, I think so."

"*Water?*"

The horror in her voice woke him from the stupor of despair in which he seemed plunged.

"Niel—Niel! It's not *fire*, is it? Not that—oh, surely not that!"

She struggled piteously to lift her head, to see—to know, and Niel, glancing round, realised the ghastly thing which threatened her.

The next moment he was in the midst of the little group of dark figures which, extending in a chain between the wrecked train and the huddled farm-buildings, were passing a line of buckets and doing their utmost, in face of certain failure, to subdue the fire.

Three of the workers, unable to resist his frantic entreaties, left their places and rushed with him to the spot where Yvonne lay, crying her husband's name and struggling wildly, as far as was possible, to free herself.

For perhaps a minute the men strove madly with the unyielding mass, but without result. Then renewed cries from the fore part of the train recalled them, and again Niel Malcolm found himself alone beside his wife.

"It's useless," he gasped hoarsely; "I can do nothing—*nothing!*"

Lest she should add to his torture, the girl made a desperate effort to control her own fear and horror. She lay still, her head resting on the arm he had managed to slip beneath it, her free hand lying against his face. The red banner of flame, though still distant, was drawing ever nearer; clouds of smoke drifted slowly past. Also there arose the cries, the terrible cries, of those who lay bound and helpless in the Fire-king's path!

Niel Malcolm stared down with mad eyes at the beloved face, which, even in its utmost extremity, tried to hide the anguish of fear

The helpless girl looked up at him, and under the very shadow of death, love triumphant shone in her dark eyes. . . . She drew his face down to her own. [Page 88, col. 1.]

and suffering beneath a smile, lest his pain be increased.

Then he looked with a shrinking horror at his own strong, lithe hands, powerless to rescue his darling from the most awful of deaths.

As if she had read the thought that crept into his reeling mind, Yvonne spoke:

"Yes, dearest, save me that way. It's the fire I dread—not death at your dear hands, Niel! Your hypodermic-case! Feel if it's in your breast-pocket, quick—*quick!* I saw you put it there this morning!"

In a dazed fashion the man slipped his hand into his coat, and drew out a small silver case.

A sob of relief broke from the prisoned girl.

"Open it—ah, thank God!" as she saw the tiny cylinders of tabloids within. "Niel—oh, don't *wait*, darling! Quick—I am so frightened!"

Niel Malcolm's face turned grey under its pallor; he staggered slightly as he rose to his feet, and in the fierce light dropped three tiny white circlets into the glass of his syringe.

"Water!" he muttered; "I must have a little."

He ran towards those who were still hopelessly fighting the nearing flames, and the next moment was back on his knees beside Yvonne.

The training of a lifetime brought to his mind the remembrance that he had not sterilised his needle, and for a second he held his hand mechanically. But in a flash followed the realisation that this, the most essential precaution, no longer mattered.

The helpless girl looked up at him, and under the very shadow of death, love triumphant shone in her dark eyes. A passion of pity dimmed their light, as quickly she drew his face down to her own.

"Kiss me good-bye, darling," she whispered. "We have been very, very happy, Niel. Don't cry so, my own boy. Always remember how I loved you, and what you have saved me from. It won't hurt, will it? Ah, quick, beloved! Don't be too late!"

One last kiss that told the speechless agony of his love and despair, and then he slipped back the sleeve from the slender arm that lay so bravely and trustingly in his hand.

The swift curtains of everlasting sleep were already falling over the eyes that never moved their love-filled gaze from the stricken face above her. All at once they opened in a wide, unseeing look. She seemed to listen; then her face lit up with a radiant happiness no longer of earth.

"Only for a little time, dearest!" she whispered. "I will wait for you. Good-bye, beloved! God keep you—till then!"

Ten minutes later a little band of men, hastily searching ahead of the roaring furnace of flame in a last forlorn hope of saving any who might be in its path, stumbled across the body of a man whose head rested on the breast of a woman, lying still and silent half-buried in the wreckage.

They bore him into safety, and one among them, a doctor, braved the now scorching heat to lay his hand on the woman's heart.

"Dead, thank God!" he muttered after a few moments, and turned to the rescued man.

A momentary investigation here also showed him the truth.

"But why?" asked his inquiring mind. Then he noticed the gleam of silver in the man's clenched hand, and looked to see what it was.

The little glass and metal cylinder told its own tale. To his quick mental sight the tragedy unfolded itself, accompanied by the devastating roar of the flames.

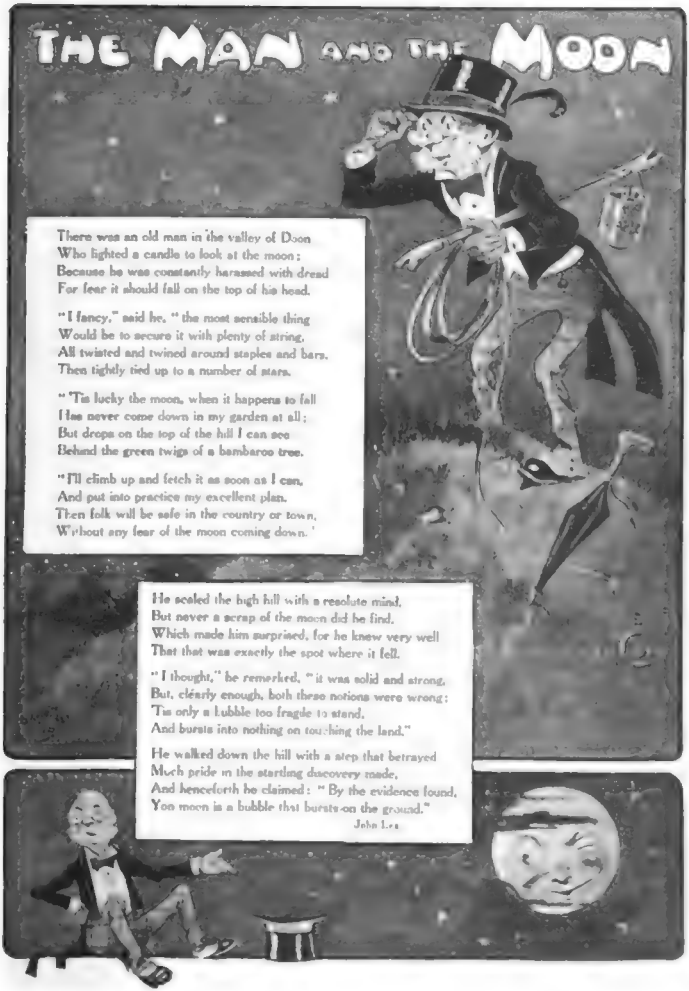
"And died of heart failure directly afterwards! Poor chap—no wonder! His sweetheart or wife, I suppose. Thank heaven he had the power to save her from *that!*" And with a shiver of horror he glanced at the place in the wreckage from which they had lifted Malcolm, hidden now in a flood of fire.

Then he looked down at the quiet face of the dead.

"God was very good to you both," he said beneath his breath.

✣ ✣ ✣

THE MAN AND THE MOON



There was an old man in the valley of Doon
Who lighted a candle to look at the moon;
Because he was constantly harassed with dread
For fear it should fall on the top of his head.

"I fancy," said he, "the most sensible thing
Would be to secure it with plenty of string,
All twisted and twined around staples and bars,
Then tightly tied up to a number of stars.

"'Tis lucky the moon, when it happens to fall
Has never come down in my garden at all;
But drops on the top of the hill I can see
Behind the green twigs of a bamboroo tree.

"I'll climb up and fetch it as soon as I can,
And put into practice my excellent plan.
Then folk will be safe in the country or town,
Without any fear of the moon coming down."

He scaled the high hill with a resolute mind,
But never a scrap of the moon did he find,
Which made him surprised, for he knew very well
That that was exactly the spot where it fell.

"I thought," he remarked, "it was solid and strong,
But, clearly enough, both these notions were wrong:
'Tis only a bubble too fragile to stand,
And bursts into nothing on touching the land."

He walked down the hill with a step that betrayed
Much pride in the startling discovery made,
And henceforth he claimed: "By the evidence found,
You moon is a bubble that bursts on the ground."

John Lea

: : THE RECEIVER : :

The Story of a Lucky Deal.

By C. Malcolm Hincks.

I.

"Two whites and two blacks, please miss, and don't trouble about the dominoes to-day. You see, George here has got a birthday present to buy for his lady-love. No ordinary present either, from what I can learn!"

George Dean flushed hotly, beneath the gaze of his three friends and the pretty waitress, whose slim fingers were resting on the marble-topped table of the tea-shop.

"Shut your row!" he growled. "Don't take any notice of them, miss."

The pretty waitress turned her head.

"Two blacks and two whites," she said coldly. "Will you take anything with your coffee?"

"Look at George blushing!" jeered the junior clerk, and the girl, still haughty, turned away, whilst George Dean wiped the perspiration from his plain, pale face, and remarked how exceedingly hot these underground smoke-rooms became.

His three fellow-clerks grinned at each other. Time was when George Dean had gone into raptures over the prettiness of the waitress who, having brought their coffee, turned away. He had learnt that her name was Fanny Bridger, and once, greatly daring, he had seen her to her home, near Kennington Oval.

But that was before he had met Clare Cooper.

And George Dean was thinking of Clare Cooper now, as gulping down his coffee, lighting his cigarette, and bidding his friends a somewhat sheepish farewell, he ascended from the basement smoking-room of the Broad Street tea-shop, and set off towards Aldgate, in the hope that he would be able to buy something in that quarter, which would be cheap but look expensive.

In short, Mr. George Dean wished to buy something that would look worth a couple of guineas, for the modest sum of ten shillings.

On the way, he carefully scrutinised the windows of the shops in Houndsditch. There were some wonderful-looking brooches selling at five shillings, but he regretfully passed them over as impossible. He felt certain that the "precious stones" would no more impress Miss Cooper than would the gilt in which they were set.

"I was a fool to have swanked so!" he growled miserably. "Told her I was on the Stock Exchange, made her think that if I wasn't a junior partner already, I was as near to as made no difference, and now, after spending every penny of my screw and my savings, in order to act the part, I reckon it's only a matter of days before she discovers that I'm a clerk, at twenty-five shillings a week, and the old man will chuck me out of the house!"

Bitterly Mr. Dean regretted the flights he had permitted his imagination to soar to, in the courtship of Clare Cooper. Clare was the daughter of an independent gentleman living at Hampstead, and they had met at a Charity Ball. George lived at Golders Green, and after the ball, he had spent hours tramping the Heath in the hope of meeting the tall, dark girl who was always elegantly dressed, and had the manner of a countess — at least, the sort of manner George believed a countess to possess.

Then, after two stray encounters, when the young clerk's imagination and tongue had run riot, meetings had become more frequent, he had twice been asked to the house on the Heath, and only that morning had received a delicately perfumed note from Miss Cooper, asking him to dine with them on Sunday.

"There's only one thing for it," he said, as he walked along. "I must create a good impression by giving Clare a handsome

present. At least, something that *appears* to be a handsome present; then when—— Why, here's the very thing!"

He had come to a halt outside a dirty-looking little shop, in the window of which old books, prints, old-fashioned jewellery, and gaudy trinkets were hopelessly mixed together, but what caught his eyes was a pearl necklace hanging over a painting of six very un-cow-like cows, grazing in a meadow impossibly green.

"The very thing!" he repeated. "They're smart at imitation pearls; even big swells wear imitations when the real things are in pawn, or something, and their pals can't tell the difference. If I can pick up that necklace cheap, I'll have it!"

A somewhat unprepossessing old gentleman, with one eye, emerged from the room at the back, wiping his walrus-like grey moustache with the back of his hand.

"Them there pearls," he said, meditatively, in reply to George Dean's question; "a very fine string of pearls worth a five pound note any day."

"Not to me!" said George promptly.

The solitary eye regarded George keenly.

"If you're thinking of giving a gal a present, a real present, something she'll be proud of for the rest of her natural, you couldn't do better than give her them pearls, and I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll let you have that there necklace for two pounds ten!"

"Dream again!" said George, with a grin.

The one-eyed man looked reproachful. He pointed out that he had taken the necklace in payment of rent owing to him by a shabby old lady, who was strange in her head, and had occupied a room in some property he owned in the neighbourhood. The old lady had been run over by a motor 'bus two years ago, and the necklace had been found in a box full of rubbish.

"As clever a lot of imitation pearls as you ever did see," he said warmly.

"Good enough in their way," said George calmly, "but for a guinea or two I could get just as good a necklace in a shop in Regent Street, with a swanky plush case thrown in!"

The one-eyed man admitted that a plush case was an advantage and reduced his price by five shillings. Receiving no encouragement he became generous, and by stages, reduced his demand to thirty shillings. He took the necklace from the window; the metal fastenings were green, the whole thing looked old and shabby.

"Ten bob," said George firmly. "That's my limit!"

"The limit ain't the word," said the one-eyed man, and he casually mentioned a few of George Dean's attributes, as they appeared to him.

In the end George secured the necklace for twelve-shillings-and-sixpence, arrived back at the office half-an-hour late, received a severe lecture from the chief clerk, and, to the detriment of his work, spent valuable time in thinking out his course of conduct for that evening.

"I'll give the necklace a good clean, and I'll polish up the fastenings, and make 'em look like gold when I meet her to-night. I'll pull the thing carelessly out of my pocket.

"'Oh, Miss Cooper,' I'll say quite casually, "'I thought this was rather a quaint string of pearls! Will you accept it as a slight memento of——'"

"Mr. Dean's off his dot!" said the office boy to the junior clerk. "He started a letter to old Hawkins calling him 'my dearest.' Good job I spotted it!"

"Yes," said the junior clerk without enthusiasm. George's job would be his next step upwards.

II.

"Well, Dick, you can't be too careful, and if you've reason to believe the young man is not what he——"

"Oh, it's Clare who suspects him," said Richard Cooper, a portly man, who, having made a small fortune out of a business which he had converted into a limited liability company as soon as he saw fierce competition would greatly reduce the profits, now attended a directors' meeting once a month, and led a life of affluence and ease. "It's a dead cert he's not a junior partner, for my friend——"

"Hullo, dad, I—oh, uncle, I forgot you were coming up for the week-end, or I'd have stopped in. I say, the swanker was awfully impressive to-night. Gave me quite a decent pearl necklace!"

A tall, dark, haughty-looking girl had entered the dining-room, where the two men sat smoking and drinking whisky; throwing her fur on to the table, she took the necklace (upon which George had worked hard for over an hour), and pushed it carelessly across to her father.

"It's evidently only second-hand," she said, "but quite a decent thing. I never thought that——"

"Those are real pearls, or I'm a Dutchman!" cried her uncle excitedly, as he leant

across the table, almost snatching them from his brother's hand, and held the necklace up to the light.

Both Richard Cooper and his daughter stared at him blankly. Uncle Joshua was senior partner in a firm of Birmingham wholesale jewellers, and should know what he was talking about, and yet if the necklace consisted of precious pearls of that size it must be worth thousands of pounds.

"Oh, they can't be real, uncle!" gasped Clare.

"I tell you this necklace consists of real pearls; the fastening is of 22 carat gold, and beautifully chased. I'm not sufficiently expert to value it accurately, but it's worth somewhere about four thousand pounds!"

Mr. Richard Cooper paled; little beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead. He saw his pleasant, respectable home in Hampstead being raided by the police; he saw his good name and that of his daughter tarnished by a terrible scandal, even if a prison cell could be escaped.

"The man's a thief or a receiver of stolen property, and he's made you his accomplice!"

Clare shrieked hysterically, and sank down on the sofa, but Joshua Cooper helped himself to another glass of whisky, and flicked the ash from his cigar.

"What are you driving at, Dick?" he asked. "If he stole or 'received' the necklace, he'd not be likely to give away a thing worth about four thousand pounds, when by making a parcel of it he could leave it at the cloakroom of any station, and call for it at his convenience!"

"It's easy enough to see the scheme," persisted Clare's father. "We know he's lied about his position, yet he's always well dressed. He's taken us to the theatre twice, and he's given Clare expensive flowers. His position in the City is a blind, Joshua; he's been making money dishonourably, either as a thief or as a receiver of stolen property. It's easy to understand now!"

"But why should he have given Clare this necklace?" persisted Joshua Cooper, fingering the pearls lovingly.

"Because he suspects the police of being on his track for one thing, and the other is quite simple. He's fallen in love with Clare, and he expects this necklace to impress her; you can be sure he's thought of some way of getting it back if she refused to marry him. Oh, it's as clear as daylight, and the only way to avoid being mixed up in a terrible scandal is to go to the police at once and give them the necklace, and put them on the young scoundrel's track!"

Joshua Cooper sighed. Rain was pattering against the window panes; it seemed hard to have to exchange comfortable carpet slippers for the muddy boots beside the fender, harder still to leave his easy chair and his brother's whisky for a tramp along the sloppy pavements to the police station.

"Don't you think——" he began, when his niece cut him short.

"Go at once!" she cried impetuously. "I'll not rest until that man is in prison. I'll never believe in——"

Suddenly she went off in a violent fit of hysterics, and leaving her in the care of the startled housekeeper, the two men pulled on their boots, and set off across the rain-swept heath towards the police station.

III.

Mr. George Dean, having divested himself of his boots, and eaten what was by dignity termed his supper of bread and cheese, sometimes supplemented by a cold sausage, sometimes by a tomato, and on very rare occasions by a cut from a cold joint, pulled the one comfortable chair in the room up to a tiny fire, and, lighting his pipe, stared gloomily into the fitful blaze.

"Mug! A silly juggins, that's what I am!" he cried savagely, biting his pipe. "She took the necklace just like she's taken theatre tickets, flowers, and—everything else I've given her. It's clear that she doesn't care a brass farthing for me!"

Moodily he reviewed the events of the past six weeks. Until six months ago he had been heart free, dwelling in a boarding-house in Bloomsbury, the possessor of a comfortable bedroom, living well and saving the odd five shillings of the twenty-five he received for his daily labour. Then he had fallen in love with Fanny Bridger, the pretty little waitress at the teashop, and he had resolved to cut down expenses and save money. Hence the exchange from Bloomsbury to a bed-sitting-room at Golders Green.

Just as he had been on the point of explaining things to Fanny, and asking her to wait for him, he had seen her one Sunday afternoon sitting in a side-car attached to a motor-cycle, which was being driven by a well-dressed young man. After three days of agony and indecision George Dean had met Clare Cooper, and dazed by her cold beauty and haughty imperious manner, had craved to enter "society" and bask in her smiles.

["THE RECEIVER" continued overleaf.]

The only "society" person to whom she introduced him was a deaf maiden aunt, who was the only guest when he had been to the house, and smiles were seldom forthcoming from the proud beauty who had so infatuated him.

No man likes to be told he is a fool, still less does he like to admit it to himself, but George Dean could hide the truth from himself no longer. He thought of Fanny with the fluffy hair. How her eyes would have glistened had he given *her* the pearls!

But then there was the man with the motor-cycle, and——

Footsteps sounded on the stairs, and the next moment the door of his room was thrown open, and a police-inspector, followed by a constable and a man in plain clothes, strode in.

"George Dean," he said sharply. "I arrest you upon suspicion of having obtained unlawfully, valuable property. I advise you to come quietly to the station, and warn you that anything you may say will be taken down in writing and may be used against you!"

For a moment the meek little clerk was dazed; then he burst into a laugh.

"You've made a mistake," he cried. "I've got no valuable property acquired either lawfully or unlawfully. I tell you what, inspector, I'll sell you everything I've got in this room for a couple of quid, and——"

"Don't let's hear any nonsense," snapped the inspector. "We'll take him to the station, Smith. You stay and make a thorough search of the room."

"But I—I say," gasped George, as the officer commanded him to put on his boots, "this is carrying things a bit too far. It's some other Dean you're after——"

"Perhaps it's the Dean of St. Paul's!" suggested the inspector. "You put your boots on, my lad, and don't let's have any nonsense."

Angry and mystified, George put on his boots, mackintosh, and cap, scowling at the plain clothes man, who was ruthlessly turning out the contents of a chest-of-drawers. He went down the stairs between the inspector and the constable, and was relieved to find a taxi-cab waiting.

During the drive he maintained a stony silence, his brain being busy with what damages he would be likely to obtain for false imprisonment, and doubts whether the Government or only this man with the peaked cap and short black moustache would be liable. The taxi stopped at the police-station and he was unceremoniously bundled out of the cab and up the steps to the charge room.

The superintendent was sitting at the desk, and by his side stood a keen-faced gentleman in a long overcoat and bowler hat, a detective from Scotland Yard, who favoured George with a frank stare when the charge was read out, and the inspector gave his evidence.

George remained silent until the superintendent asked him if he wished to say anything.

He did wish to say something, and he said it with heat.

"Hold on!" interrupted the man from Scotland Yard, who had been regarding him curiously. "Ever seen this before?"

And he held before the astonished eyes of Mr. Dean the pearl necklace he had purchased for twelve-and-sixpence at the dirty little shop in Aldgate, and only a few hours ago presented to Miss Clare Cooper.

"Of course I have!" he cried. "How did you get it? I gave it to a young lady of my acquaintance this evening."

"Then," said the detective quickly, "it's up to you to give an explanation as to how it came into your possession—you need not do so unless you wish, but it would be rather interesting to know whether it is your habit to give Christmas presents worth about four thousand pounds to young ladies of your acquaintance!"

For a moment George thought the keen-faced man was joking.

"Four thousand pounds! Why, it's not worth four thousand pence! I gave twelve-and-sixpence for it at a shop in Aldgate this afternoon."

The superintendent and the inspector laughed heartily.

"You've got a nerve!" said the inspector.

But the man from Scotland Yard did not laugh. There was something so perfectly frank and spontaneous in the explanation that he was impressed.

"Can you take me to the shop now?" he asked.

"Of course I can," said George, "though I expect it will be shut up."

"It will soon be opened," said the detective grimly. "Please send for a taxi, inspector, and you'd better come with us. We'll stop at the station and pick up one of the local men."

Then, and only then, did George Dean feel frightened. It was obvious that the necklace *was* worth four thousand pounds; the police would not make a fuss over a necklace

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of imitation pearls. How the man came to sell it for twelve-and-sixpence he could not imagine, but one thing was perfectly clear, and that was that Clare or her father was responsible for his arrest, and if the one-eyed man, scared at the sight of the police, denied all knowledge of the necklace, he, George Dean, would probably spend the night in a prison cell and have considerable difficulty in proving his innocence.

"This comes of swanking!" he said miserably to the detective, as the three of them started in the taxi. "It's bad enough to make a fool of yourself over a girl that's worth it, but when she——"

"Look here," said the detective, "I think it will pay you to tell me the whole story. I'm inclined to think that you're innocent of the charge, but you've brought the trouble on yourself; according to the story we've heard, you've posed as junior partner on the Stock Exchange, and always seemed to have plenty of money to spend, although you were living in cheap lodgings and earning a small salary as a clerk."

"Oh, she found out that, did she?" gasped George.

"She did!" said the man from Scotland Yard. "I should say that the lady needed little instruction as to how many beans make five!"

George flushed with rage and humiliation. So Clare Cooper had seen through his deception, and yet had encouraged him to spend money on her, no doubt to drop him the moment she discovered his funds had come to an end! Rapidly he told the two police officers the whole story, and was giving his views on women in general, and one woman in particular, when the taxi pulled up sharply at a police-station near Aldgate, and a local officer was picked up.

Nothing was known against the one-eyed man, and the prisoner heaved a sigh of relief.

It was nearly midnight when they reached the little shop, and in response to a violent ringing at the bell, a window above went up, and the head and shoulders of the one-eyed man appeared. He demanded in lurid language the meaning of the disturbance.

"We're police officers, and we want a word with you," said the detective shortly, and, still grumbling, the man drew in his head. After George and his captors had stood in the rain for some time, whilst the taxi driver, in the comparative shelter of his seat, lit a cigarette, and took a mild interest in the proceedings, the one-eyed man appeared in a dressing-gown, carrying a guttering candle.

The detective produced the necklace, and held it up in the light of the candle.

"Did you sell this necklace to this man here?" he demanded, half pushing George forward.

"Of course I did," came the calm reply. "Fancy dragging a man out of bed at midnight to ask him about a business deal!"

The old man's solitary eye gleamed angrily. The detective took his hand from George's shoulder.

"Then perhaps you will explain how it came into your possession," he said.

The old man drew his dressing-gown round him.

"If one of you will shut the door, and stop that draftied draught," he snapped, "I'll tell you all about it. I don't want to make enemies of you police chaps, but I'm blowed if I can see what business it is of yours, and, at any rate, you might have waited until the morning."

The inspector, with a puzzled expression on his face, went to the door and closed it.

"How much do you consider this necklace is worth?" asked the detective, toying with the pearls.

"Every bit of the twelve-and-sixpence that that young fellow paid for it, and a bit over," said the old man promptly. "It belonged to an old gal who lived in a bit of property I've got near here, and a terror she was to keep me waiting for the rent. The story was that she was a lady, a real toff what had had an unfortunate love affair, and taken to drink. At last I got sick of it, and told her straight that unless I saw the colour of her money I should chuck her out.

"'Don't you worry, landlord,' she said, 'you'll get your money all right. I'm expecting some funds, and if they don't come in a week I'll have to sell my belongings, and I'll pay you then!'

"'Belongings!' I says, 'it's weeks', not a day's rent I want!'

"Then she laughed curious.

"'You'll get your rent. Let me stop on here, and I'll sign a paper making over to you everything I possess!'

"Well, I had my doubts, but the poor old gal was an absolute wreck, and I took the paper and——"

"Have you got that paper now?"

The sharp interruption came from the man from Scotland Yard. George and the inspector stood silent and bewildered.

"Yes, I have!" snapped the old man,

("THE RECEIVER" continued overleaf.)

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angry at the thought that his word should be doubted. "It's in my desk; it was a business deal, and I keep business papers. Well, as I told this young gent when he bought the pearls, the old gal was run over by a motor 'bus and killed. The stuff in her box was rags, save for some decent lace—I was in the lace trade once and I knew it was good. I sold the lace at a fair price, which paid for the rent that was owing, but though I've had them imitation pearls in the window for——"

"Didn't you have the pearls valued?"

"Not me; I ain't so green. Fancy paying a fee to have *them* valued. Why, any mug would know if they was real they'd be worth a fortune, but being——"

"It so happens," said the detective quickly, "that they are real, and it seems we have to congratulate you, Mr. Dean, on a record bargain!"

The shop was plunged in darkness. The guttering candle had fallen to the floor, and the one-eyed man was talking softly to himself!

IV.

The police informed Mr. Cooper the next day that his suspicions had been unfounded, and as Miss Cooper had relinquished her claim to the necklace on handing it to the police, it had been returned to George Dean, and as a consequence Miss Clare Cooper again developed hysterics.

To the surprise of the one-eyed man, George Dean refused to take advantage of his mistake, and suggested that the necklace should be sold and the money divided between them.

"You're a gent," said the one-eyed man hoarsely.

The "gent," bewildered by his good fortune, left the office at lunch time on the Saturday and mechanically made his way to the tea-shop.

A stumpy girl in glasses brought him a cup of tea and a roll and butter. With only five shillings in solid cash, he could not credit that he would soon be a very rich man.

"Where's Miss Bridger?" he asked listlessly.

"Oh, she's not been well lately," said the stumpy girl, with a giggle. "Disappointed in love, they say, and yesterday that young fool of a brother of hers pitched her out of his sidecar on the Portsmouth Road. She's at home and——"

"Brother!—Good heavens!"

George was bounding towards the stairs. The stumpy girl caught him.

"I say, you'll have to pay for a cup of tea and a roll and butter now it's been served, whether you eat it or not."

George shrieked with laughter. An earnest chess player glared at him.

Ten minutes later a reckless taxi driver deposited him outside a house in Kennington.

Miss Fanny Bridger, a little flushed, received him. Explanations are always difficult, but when George Dean left the little house he was smiling.

MONEY IS ALWAYS WELCOME.
Turn to page 67 and see how you may win some in a simple and fascinating Competition.

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MR. EDITOR —HIS PAGE.

Sly Prattle in the Cosy Corner.

FOR SOLDIERS AND SAILORS TOO.

GENTLE Service readers, try to like the page devoted to you this month. It was originated by us unaided, but we hope to have you as allies in future, and embark, so to speak, on combined operations. Send me in a budget of good stories and I will curtail the spreading glory of the heading and give more room for letterpress. Being all on our own with a technical section, we hardly liked to venture very far, fearing to see an enraged howitzer battery unlimber in Trafalgar Square and demolish these offices by indirect fire, as I understand, owing to the enormous range of modern artillery, is quite possible.

Our cards are very good, and our silver pencil-cases highly recommended, so out with the anecdotes, and we will out with the gifts.

THE SPY PERIL.

I should value the opinion of East Coast readers on the very remarkable article from the pen of Mr. William le Queux which commences on page 21. There is little doubt that the German spy has been by no means eradicated; we have, to quote Shakespeare, if the Germans will allow me a line or so from their adopted dramatist, scotched the snake but have not killed it. The authorities do not seem to tackle the spy question with that welcome efficiency which they display in other directions, and a little more zeal would engender a comfortable feeling in the hearts of patriotic Britons.

THE MODERN MOTOR-CYCLE.

I speak as a man and a brother to budding motor-cyclists, mellow with the good fellowship and charity that come from long experience of the road. Which of you this spring is investing in his first chugger-bike, be it a purring baby two-stroke, a lusty 4-h.p. single cylinder, or a mountain-shaking 8-h.p. twin?

Whatever you buy, whoever you be, the innards of the thing will remain to you a perpetual mystery until a minute fly commits suicide in the jet of the carburettor, or something short-circuits in the ignition. Then you will sit weeping by the roadside, like Marius among the ruins.

Wherefore, take time by the forelock, and get hold of a new book I have just been reading. It is called, "The Modern Motor-Cycle: How to Run, Ride, and Repair it."

This little work, costing but a mere shilling, is as comprehensive as its title, and deals exhaustively, but not exhaustingly, with every disease of the motor-cycle, and the best means of keeping it in health. It guides you in buying, it discusses the side-car question; in short, it is a complete guide to a vast and enthralling subject.

The author is Mr. B. H. Davies, than whom no one, as far as motor-cycling goes, is more competent to rouse men with the trumpet and the god of war with a song. His name is a household—I mean a garage—word among the old brigade of motor-cyclists such as myself, and there is no more creditable thing than that to be said of any man.

"A MODERN PORTIA."

Many readers kindly favoured me with their verdict on this story, which appeared in the March ROYAL, and opinions were almost evenly divided. The ten silver pencil-cases I offered go to those lucky people mentioned below. My admiration goes out to "St. Anthony Monkey Face," but he (or she) transgressed the rules, which demanded a postcard criticism, so there is, alas! no prize for him (or her). Pencil-cases have been sent to:

Miss B. Doxford, 3 Grange Crescent, Sunderland; G. R. Girdlestone, Bere-ford House, Oswestry, Salop; Chas. W. Leathdem, Tudor Park, Holywood, Down; H. Giles, Barnfield, Gillingham, Kent; Mrs. S. G. Ward, 6 Cross Street, Birley Carr, near Sheffield; Ernest A. Perkins, 30 Field Road, Forest Gate, Essex; L. B. Pickbourne, Gilbrook, Hester Street, Northampton; Rev. W. Boyce, Bramfield Vicarage, Halesworth; D. Harris, Little Hundridge Farm, Great Missenden, Bucks; and Walter Barker, 72 Windsor Road, Leyton, N.E.

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